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THE  
REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST,

EXPLAINED AGREEABLY TO

The Analogy of Holy Scripture :

AND THE

INTERPRETATION OF ITS SYMBOLS.

BY A CLERGYMAN.

“ Μακάριος ὁ ἀναγινώσκων, καὶ οἱ ἀκούοντες τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας, καὶ τηροῦντες τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ γεγραμμένα· ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς. ”—Rev. i. 3.

“ Καὶ λέγει μοι. Μὴ σφραγίσῃς τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου· ὁ καιρὸς ἐγγύς ἐστιν. ”—Rev. xxii. 10.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THIS Book of the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, which GOD gave unto Him, was expressly written for the instruction and comfort of the Church of GOD, and our LORD Himself most earnestly inviteth us to the meditation of this wonderful prophecy: and calleth them blessed, who read, and keep the things which are written therein. It therefore well becometh the members of His body, who have received that anointing from the Holy One, which teacheth them all things, in their devout meditations of this book, earnestly to seek for its true interpretation, that reading, they may understand the mysteries that are contained therein; and this duty especially devolves upon His ministers, whose calling is to feed the flock of GOD, which He has purchased with His own blood. In order to this, two things are indispensably necessary:—

The light of the Holy Spirit of GOD, in whose light alone we can see light, or compare spiritual things with spiritual; and

A knowledge of the true interpretation of the symbolic forms and imagery.

All failures in the attempts to explain the mysteries of this book, and all false interpretations, have arisen from the absence of these requisites: and those who look to oriental customs, to the conjectures of learned men, or to any theory of interpretation based upon past history, for light on this portion of Holy Scripture, without first having arrived at the true interpretation of its symbolism, are not walking in the light of God's Spirit, and cannot attain unto any right knowledge of its mysteries.

It will be admitted, that in order to comprehend any book, even of human composition, the language in which it is written must first be understood. Now the language of the prophecy of this book being purely symbolic, we must on the same principle learn the true meaning of its emblems, before we can understand the things which are contained therein.

Moreover, as this book is the Revelation of Him from whom all the other Scriptures proceeded, its symbolism must necessarily be in perfect analogy and keeping with them. And we may be assured, that no interpretation of its symbols, which will not bear this test, that is, which has not been derived from the Scriptures, is of God.

On this principle we have, for some years past, meditated upon this wonderful Revelation. In so doing, its mysteries have opened before us more and more, and such marvellous light has been thrown upon

them, as greatly to humble us before God, and at the same time to fill us with gratitude and praise. And we are persuaded, that those who are unwilling to adopt this system of interpretation, will never be able either rightly to understand, or attain unto any true knowledge of these prophecies.

We are, therefore, glad to find that this principle is now becoming recognized by others, who are making this Book their study, as will be seen from the following passage, which we extract from "The Church Page 267. of England Quarterly Review," for October, 1849.

The writer, in speaking of the failure of others, who had misinterpreted the prophecy, says, "When they attempted the interpretation of the Apocalypse, they stumbled at the very threshold, from not considering that it is a symbolical book ; and by their gross literal expectations, degraded the whole subject, and have done much towards rendering it as ridiculous and contemptible as those persons esteem it, who have only heard of the writings of such men as Papias, or the other parties who are branded with the name of ' Chiliasts.' They ought to have remembered that it is a symbolical book, and that the very first step to be taken in getting at the meaning of such a book is understanding what the symbols denote ; that is, what real thing is described by each symbol, what real act is meant by each symbolical action, and what current time is signified by the symbolical notes of time, in such a book ; for everything, without exception, is symbolical—seals, trumpets, vials—as the beasts and

the times of their continuance; and every symbol must have a precise meaning, which must be adhered to throughout."

We would here remark, that although everything in this book is symbolic in a certain sense, it is not the less real; and in many cases contains the literal, in connexion with the symbolic. And we may repeat again, that the interpretation of the symbols must not be the creation of man's fancy, but must be taken from the inspired Word of God, or we shall be as far from understanding the mind of CHRIST therein, as any of our predecessors have been.

Before we enter upon the interpretation of this prophecy, we will lay before the reader our views of symbolism in general, and the source from whence they are derived; in order to show that it is one of God's modes of communicating His mind to man. This language, like God Himself, is universal and unchangeable; and capable of being understood and appreciated by every creature under heaven: for it is not like verbal language, subject to change or variation, but is the same in all places, and at all times. For instance, a cedar tree, under whatever name, is emblematical of the same thing in all nations, and among all people, and so of any other symbol taken from nature: whereas words are subject to change, both in form and signification, and in course of time are used in a sense different from their original meaning. Therefore, whenever a symbol is used to express an idea, we have only to identify such emblem or

symbol, and we have a certainty of the meaning intended to be conveyed, in whatever language, or under whatever name it may be expressed.

We are taught in the Scriptures, that self-manifestation is the end and purpose of God in the things which He has made; and as the manifestation of Himself is the basis of all His acts, it follows that everything which He has created is symbolical of some feature in His Divine character and attributes. It is this principle which S. Paul recognizes in his Epistle to the Romans, where he teaches that the heathen are without excuse for having changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things; that is, for having become so partial and blind in their worship, as to take individual objects out of the whole, whereby to express God, when they ought to have seen Him equally manifested in all things that He had made; not indeed as inhabiting them, or as being of their substance, as some supposed, but as the Creator, who had formed them for the manifestation of Himself. “That which may be known of God, (says the Apostle) is manifest in them, (that is in Rom. i. 19, 20. His works,) for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” Here we have it declared by the Apostle, that “that which may be known of God,” is manifested in the works of creation, that is

to say, not only His power, but His Godhead also. This truth is the foundation of all the symbolism of Scripture, whereby God has expressed His mind to us as His intelligent children. Doubtless Adam, before he sinned, was able to read the character of God in all His works ; but through his fall, he lost that light which had been given him by God, and his descendants, by reason of their corruption, lost more and more of this Divine knowledge, so that at last their foolish hearts being darkened, they became vain in their imaginations, and professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. No man can now understand these mysteries of creation, unless God, who, at the beginning, commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine into his heart by the light of His Holy Spirit, to give him the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, in the face of JESUS CHRIST, in the meditation of His Holy Word. The importance, as well as the duty of understanding the symbolic language of Scripture, must be evident to every one ; for without it, a large portion of the Old Testament, and much of the New, must remain sealed and useless to the Church.

In the examination of Scripture symbols, we find they are twofold ; simple, and compound. The simple form expresses one idea, and consequently one emblem is used apart and alone, as gold, silver, brass, myrrh, aloes, &c.

The compound, is when two or more symbols are used to express several ideas in connexion with, or in



relation to, each other. We have examples of this in the composition of the Incense which was offered in the service of the Tabernacle, and in the Holy Anointing oil; and also in the Tabernacle itself which was composed of many symbolic parts.

Exod. xxx.  
23—38.

We may also add, that in the Holy Scriptures, God has not only taken things from nature of His own workmanship, but also things which are of man's workmanship to express spiritual realities: such as seals, trumpets, vials, and measures; and also numbers, to express the order and sequence of His purposes in time. To all of these, He has given a certain signification according to the connexion in which they are used, nor are we left to form our conjectures as to their meaning, since we have their interpretation most certainly and clearly given, either directly or inferentially, in the word of God.

So also we have persons and events used symbolically to denote spiritual things, as when Balaam and Jezebel are mentioned in the Epistles to Pergamos and Thyatira: for we know that these persons were not living at the time the Epistles were written. So also when Jews are mentioned in this prophecy, it is not in a literal, but in a spiritual or figurative sense: for a man calling himself a Jew, in the letter, is or is not so, and cannot by affirmation or denial alter his standing; whereas Christians, to whom the name of Jew metaphorically refers, may make a false profession of Christianity, saying they are God's spiritual Israel—that is, Christians *in deed and in truth*, whilst they are not, but

do lie. The expression, “ *they* are of the synagogue of Satan,” is a continuation of the metaphor: for no one is so absurd as to suppose that Satan has literally a visible synagogue on the earth. We may also remark, that the “sealing of the twelve tribes of Israel,” cannot be understood in a literal, but in a symbolical or spiritual sense: for as it cannot be supposed that a literal seal is intended, so it is equally clear that the literal Israel cannot be meant: and as 144,000 are sealed before the judgments, in order to be preserved from them, so they are evidently a people already believing in CHRIST, gathered unto the LORD in His Church, and dwelling in the midst of those upon whom these judgments will fall. All this is manifestly not true of the *literal* tribes of Israel, neither indeed can it apply to them in any sense: for they have been lost from the time that they were carried away captive by Shalmaneser. They are an “outcast,” and unknown people unto this day. “The dispersed of Judah” and Benjamin are the only Jews known in the earth, and none of these ever pretend to belong to the ten tribes. It is, therefore, most clear and certain, that “the sealed tribes” cannot relate to the *literal* Israel, but to a people in covenant with God and walking by faith according to CHRIST

Gal. iii. 29. JESUS; even the spiritual Israel, who “being CHRIST’S are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Thus we see the true intention and use of symbols and emblems. They express the truth of God in a mystery, and are intended for the spiritual; for such as can read and understand, and will keep the sayings

of this prophecy. And we shall perceive as we advance in the study of the book itself, that it is written, as we before said, exclusively for the Christian Church, and belongs to it alone.

Let us then realize these exceeding great privileges which belong to us Christians, and to which we are called of GOD, in CHRIST JESUS our LORD ; that so we may be manifestly of the truth, and assure our hearts before Him. We continually pray in the services of the Church, that God would "grant unto us in this world knowledge of His truth, and in the world to come life everlasting." And in proportion as the truth of God is valued, (unto which nothing can be compared) and the knowledge thereof sought in all Holy Scripture, so will this book of the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST be appreciated : for it is the concentration of all the revelations which God has given us in His Word, and has in this, and in many other respects, a special claim upon our attention. And let it be remembered, that in this book, they alone are accounted blessed who read, and understand, and *keep* its sayings ; that it is presented to us "Unsealed," and "Open ;" accompanied with the most solemn sanctions, declaring also the judgments that will come upon those who presume to add anything to, or take anything from it.

It remains only to add, that in seeking its true interpretation, we have availed ourselves of what other interpreters have said, whose attention has been directed to the same subject ; and as our object is doubtless one, even the discovering and unfolding of the truth, we

have in some cases, not only used the light they afforded, but also adopted their own words or forms of expressing the truth, when they appeared to us the best mode of setting it forth. And as in these our meditations, we have invoked "The Spirit of Truth" to guide ourselves; even so would we commend our readers to the same Holy Spirit: praying that He may enlighten their minds to understand; open their hearts to receive; and give them grace to keep, the things which are written therein. For as there is no greater condemnation, than "not receiving the love of the truth" when it is set before us, so there is no greater honour than to be "of them which keep the sayings of this book."

2 THESS. II.  
10.

REV. XXII. 9.

Finally, whatever blessing we ourselves have received in our meditations, or whatever benefit we may be the means of conveying to others, to GOD alone be the praise and glory, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

*Pentecost, 1850.*

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**THE  
REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.**

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# THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

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## PART I.

THE NAME OF THE BOOK. BY WHOM THE REVELATION WAS GIVEN. THE END OR OBJECT FOR WHICH IT WAS WRITTEN. ITS FULFILMENT COMMENCING FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION. BY WHOM, AND UNTO WHOM IT WAS SENT. COMMENDATION OF THE BOOK.

I. THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, which God gave unto Him, to Rev. i. 1-3. show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified *it* by His angel unto His servant John:

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of JESUS CHRIST, and of all things that he saw.

3 Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand.

BEFORE entering upon the exposition of this book of the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, concentrating as it does, all the light of Divine truth previously revealed in the Holy Scriptures, it would be very profitable to take a review of the progress and development of the purpose of God from its first opening to Adam in Paradise to its full consummation, or manifestation in the new heavens and new earth. But as this would take too large a space, we must content ourselves with reference only to the Scriptures in the course of our exposition.

The name or title of the book, is evidently intended to convey to us its distinctive character, as having a peculiarity belonging to no other book of Holy Writ. And its distinctiveness of character appears to be this—that as in all the other books of the Holy Scriptures, JESUS CHRIST is the *Revealer*, here He is not only the Revealer, but the *Revealed* One. If it were not so, there is no reason why this book should be entitled “The Revelation of JESUS CHRIST,” more than any other book of Scripture: for in them all, JESUS CHRIST is the Revealer. It was *the Spirit of CHRIST* in the Prophets of old, which gave forth the light of God’s truth; even of that salvation, now ready to be revealed in the last time. In the Scriptures of the New Testament also, JESUS CHRIST is the Revealer. As it is written, “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men,”—“the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” By the same inspiration, not only was the history of CHRIST written by the four Evangelists, but the truth in the Apostolic Epistles to the Churches was also revealed by JESUS CHRIST, inasmuch as He used them, by the HOLY GHOST, to declare and make known His truth. If this, therefore, were all that is signified in the name of the book we are now considering, there is nothing in it which distinguishes it from any other book of Scripture—no assignable reason why it should be called “The Revelation of JESUS CHRIST,” more than any other book. Such an indefinite use of words, is however contrary to God’s way of using them, and has no precedent in Scripture. On the contrary, Scripture names invariably express the nature or character of the thing named, as all the names of God, and of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, do testify. And even

1 S. Pet. 1.  
10—12.

S. John 1. 4.

S. John 1. 9.

those names which the authority or use of the Church has given to the books of Scripture have in them a peculiar appropriateness. Thus *Genesis* signifies generation or production of all things; *Exodus*, the going forth. But when God *Himself* uses a name, as for example, "*The Gospel*," or Good News, it always contains in it the very character of that which is named. Seeing, then, that the HOLY GHOST has chosen to entitle this book "*The Revelation of JESUS CHRIST*," we may infer that there is here something implied in that name which does not belong to other books of Scripture. Moreover, John did not receive it by inspiration of the HOLY GHOST,—that is, it did not spring up in the mind of the Apostle by secret teaching, or inward revelation of the Spirit, but it was signified unto him by a messenger, or shown him by an angel. Further, the words Apocalypse, or Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, as used in the Holy Scriptures, almost invariably signify, not JESUS CHRIST *revealing*, but JESUS CHRIST *revealed*. There is but one passage in Scripture where it can be otherwise rendered, and there also we believe it will admit of the same signification, namely, in S. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, where he says, "But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after men. For I neither received it of men, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of JESUS CHRIST. It pleased God to reveal His SON in me that I might preach Him among the Gentiles." It is generally supposed that the Apostle meant to say that God revealed His SON JESUS CHRIST in him by direct inspiration of the HOLY GHOST. This we believe, but his words evidently imply more, as may be gathered from the narrative which the Apostle gives of that revelation, in

Gal. i. 11, 12,  
15, 16.

which he describes the outward and visible manifestation of CHRIST to him after He had been received up into heaven and glorified. This revelation of CHRIST in glory was more than any other of the Apostles witnessed, save John in the Isle of Patmos. They all saw Him after His resurrection : for He appeared unto them continually, going in and out amongst them forty days, teaching them the things concerning the kingdom of GOD ; but Paul beheld Him after He had ascended and had been glorified, and made Head over all things unto His Church. It was not, therefore, by the inspiration of the HOLY GHOST only, but by the Apocalypse of JESUS CHRIST, that Paul was taught the truth as it is in JESUS. This passage, therefore, as the only questionable one among many where this expression is used, rather confirms and illustrates this interpretation than otherwise. The *details* of this book also show that it is not CHRIST the revealer, but CHRIST the revealed One that is set forth. It is a revelation of CHRIST glorified ; of CHRIST seated on the throne of GOD ; of CHRIST as the Head of the Church, and High Priest of our profession ; of His presence in the Church, “walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks ;” of CHRIST as exercising all power in heaven and in earth, guiding and directing all things, and overruling all events, until the day of eternal redemption ; of CHRIST coming again from heaven with power and great glory, accompanied with all His saints. The title of this book, therefore, has the highest claim on our attention ; for what can we desire to know so much, or what can be so profitable to us as the knowledge of JESUS CHRIST, Whom to know truly is life eternal ?

Moreover, to encourage us in the meditation of this

ἀποκαλύ-  
ψεως.

1 Cor. i. 7.  
1 Thess. i. 7.  
1 S. Peter i.  
7, 13.

wonderful Prophecy, we are expressly told *the end* for which it was given. The LORD JESUS received it not for Himself alone, but for His Church. "God gave it unto Him to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass." It is written for the servants of the LORD JESUS, for none but those who are one with Him, and partake of His Spirit can know the things which are written therein, as it is declared in another place, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, <sup>1 Cor. ii. 9.</sup> neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." GOD the FATHER enables us by the HOLY GHOST, to apprehend the things of CHRIST, and by them His servants are strengthened, sustained, and comforted in all their tribulations. Herein we are made to know the fellowship of His sufferings, to taste of His joy, to discern the dignity of our calling, and to mark the succession and progress of events, which prepare for, lead to, and terminate in, the glorious manifestation of His kingdom. Without this book, the Scriptures would be deprived of their chief glory; and the Church, of the knowledge of God's righteous, merciful, and gracious dealing towards us these eighteen hundred years. It hath been to her as a guide in all her wanderings, and the means of keeping alive in her heart, the hope which is set before us, even the resurrection from the dead with eternal glory. Most wise and gracious, therefore, is it in God to have given us such a book, for our good always. Seeing, then, that God of His loving kindness, and tender compassion towards us, desireth that we should be made acquainted with such glorious realities, let us

not prove ourselves unworthy of such goodness by hardening our hearts against Him; let us not contravene His will, and by unbelief close our eyes to the truth which it reveals. For it is God's will that His servants should know it. God hath given it unto His Son for this express purpose, that it should be shown unto them. If we remain ignorant of it therefore, we must not ascribe that ignorance to any want of grace in God, but to ourselves, even to our unbelief and hardness of heart. Neither let us endeavour to conceal our hypocrisy by calling that a *sealed* book, which God has called a *Revelation*; let us not wickedly endeavour to close it, when God has commanded it to be open, saying, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand." But if we are the servants of JESUS CHRIST, if we are living not unto ourselves but unto God, and for God; if we rejoice in the exaltation of His Son, and love His appearing and kingdom, then let us receive, as we are most bounden, with the liveliest gratitude and praise this glorious revelation.

Rev. xxii. 10.

We are moreover told, that this Prophecy, which was sent unto His servants for their instruction, concerneth "*things which must shortly come to pass.*" This being said at that time, shows that the book was then to be used and read with profit; that is, it was then useful and profitable for the guidance of the Church; and if it was so *then*, how much more *now*, seeing that it reflects so much light and instruction upon the past history of Christendom, and reveals to us the time of the end, when CHRIST shall appear in His glorious Majesty, and shall come once more to this earth, not to suffer and die, but to reign in glory with His saints.

The next thing to be observed is, the way by which this revelation was shown unto His servant. And we find that it was not given immediately by the LORD Himself, but mediately by an angel. The nature of this Angel, or Minister, by whom it was signified unto John, may be gathered from certain parts of this book. And that we may not be supposed to have come to a partial conclusion on a subject which involves so much, and is of such deep interest to the Church, it will be well for us to consider what is the nature and true constitution of the Church. Now, the Church is the body of CHRIST, the fulness of Him Which filleth all in all. It has in it all fulness, the fulness of power, the fulness of wisdom, and every other kind of fulness necessary for its perfection. Its constitution is as complete as a human body, being united to, and one with its glorified Head in the heavens. A part of this body or Church is with CHRIST, and a part on earth, and these are not two Churches, but one—one Church. Neither is this Church divided, because a portion of it is within the vail, and the other part without; but the Church of CHRIST is absolutely and essentially one, and indivisible; and every member thereof, whether in heaven or on earth, holds of the Head, and by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. As man's body is complete in itself, and wisely fitted for the fulfilling of all its functions for the good of the body, without the intervention of another power, so also is the Body of CHRIST. It is not less true in the spiritual than it is in the natural; and is possibly more so, because the one is but a shadow or type of the other, and the ante-type never contains less, but always more than the

Vide 1 Cor.  
xii. 12.

type. We infer, therefore, that there is no need of, nor can there be in the Body of CHRIST, the intervention of another party. If it were not so, we should

Colos. ii. 10. not be complete in CHRIST, but we *are* complete in Him; and have been quickened together with *Him* Who is exalted far above all principality and power. The Church hath fellowship with the LORD JESUS, her risen and glorified Head in all things. The Church needeth not, neither receiveth aid from any other

S. John xvii. 5. source. "The glory (saith our LORD), which Thou hast given Me, I have given them. I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." Instead therefore of the Church receiving aid *from* without, or from any who do not belong to this body, whether angels, principalities or powers, it is *they* who learn from the Church; according as it is written,—

Eph. iii. 10. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known *by the Church* the manifold wisdom of GOD." If the Church was ministered unto in spiritual things by angels; if to render her complete another party be needed, she would not be the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. But she is, and no other party hath, nor can have, any place in *the body of CHRIST*. And as this is the constitution and pre-eminence of the Church of CHRIST, as plainly stated in the Scriptures, we are constrained and bound to infer, that this Angel whom the LORD JESUS sent as a messenger to His servant John, was one holding a place in the same body and closely related to him in the bonds of CHRIST. And as he is evidently not a person like John in the flesh, it follows that he must be one of the departed saints who is thus used of the LORD. Moreover, as the Church of CHRIST is essentially ONE, both living and departed,



why should we not suppose that He can fulfil His functions of High Priest by the latter, as well as by ourselves, by the disembodied saints as by the embodied? for whether disembodied or not, we all live together with Him and for Him, and may be used of Him for the good of the whole body. Why should we not believe that we can be benefited by them as well as they by us? by their prayers, by their longing desire for and hope of the resurrection; when CHRIST shall clothe them with their house from heaven, and change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto His own most glorious body? And being ONE BODY, do we not grow together, and advance together in a meetness for the resurrection, “increasing with the increase of God?” Colos. ii. 19. If anything, are not our departed brethren rather privileged beyond us? Are they not present with the LORD? Phil. i. 21—23. And if so, where is the difficulty that one of them should be sent to signify this revelation unto John? Is not the intercession of the Church carried on, not on earth only, but also in heaven, where JESUS our forerunner is for us entered as the great High Priest of our profession? Does not the offering of incense within the most holy place represent the intercession of the Church in heaven, whilst that of the holy place represents that of the Church on earth? And if there be intercession, why not ministry by the Cherubim? and if some of the departed minister to the Church in heaven, may they not, if need be, and they are sent of the LORD, minister to us on earth?

Having made these observations in relation to the Angelic Messenger, whom our LORD sent to show these things unto John, let us next see what description he gave of himself to the Apostle. We are told that when John, in admiration of this messenger, who

showed him these things, would have fallen down at his feet to worship him, he said unto him, "See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant, and (one) of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book." However some may construe this passage, we believe the sense of it to be this—that the angel was John's fellow-servant, and of John's brethren the prophets, and one of the company of those who observed and kept the words of this book ; that is, he was John's fellow-servant, and held the office of prophet, as a fellow-servant of the prophets. For the construction of the words evidently implies that he was associated with him in ministry, though not in the same office, but with him as being of the Prophets, who in the Church are associated with Apostles as one foundation, according as it is written, "And are built upon the foundation of Apostles and Prophets, JESUS CHRIST Himself being the chief corner stone." Hence it is said of the Cherubim within the most holy place, that "their faces should look one to another." And thus the Church received the light and judgment of the LORD who dwelt between them. It is the office of the Prophet to bring light from the LORD by the HOLY GHOST, and it is the office of the Apostle to discern that light, and confirm it by the same Spirit. This foundation principle is not departed from in this instance, if the angel whom the LORD sent unto John the Apostle, was a Prophet. And that he was of this class,—that is, a Prophet in the Church of CHRIST, appears still more evident, from the expression which he uses to designate himself in another place under similar circumstances : for when the Apostle fell at his feet to worship him, he said, "See thou do it not : I am thy fellow-servant ; and of thy brethren, that have

Rev. xii. 9.

Eph. ii. 20.

Ex. xxv. 30.

Ps. lxxx. 1.

Rev. xix. 10.

the testimony of JESUS : worship GOD : for the testimony of JESUS is the spirit of prophecy." Here, instead of "thy brethren the Prophets," he says, "of thy brethren that have the testimony of JESUS ;" and this testimony is said to be "the spirit of prophecy." By comparing these two passages where the angel designates himself, in the one, as "*the fellow-servant of John, and of his brethren the Prophets ;*" and in the other, as "*his fellow-servant, and of his brethren that have the spirit of prophecy ;*" we have sufficient evidence that this messenger, who was sent to signify the revelation unto John, was a Prophet, associated with the Apostolic Ministry in the Church. And this is no doubt plainly stated, to show forth a foundation principle in the Church of CHRIST.

The words δούλος τοῦ θεοῦ used by the angel, are also, we submit, conclusive of themselves to his being one of the saints. For though angels are "*ministering* Heb. i. 14. *spirits,*" (λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα) they are not called *servants* (δούλοι) which name is given to those only in the Apocalypse who are associated with, and partakers of the ministry of CHRIST in the Church. God gave it unto Him that He might show it unto *His servants*, and it was sent and signified unto John by one who designates himself his *fellow-servant*, and of his *brethren the prophets*, which the angels are not, as they are only used for external ministry, and have a charge only over the saints in their present condition to keep them in all their ways from outward danger and violence, watching over them and bearing them up in their hands, lest at any time they should dash their feet against a stone. They are indeed used ministerially in God's providence which they watch over, and direct for good, under CHRIST, Who is now exalted above all princi-

pality and power, but not used for ministry in the Church of CHRIST, as they were used under the law, which “was given by the disposition of angels,” that being but a shadow of heavenly things, or as S. Paul calls it in his Epistle to the Galatians,—“the rudiments of the world.” The same distinction between earthly and heavenly things is made by the Apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews, where he shows the superiority and excellency of the one over the other, and the greater responsibility of those who reject Him that speaketh from heaven, in His servants whom He appoints to minister in His Name, saying,

Heb. ii. 1—4. “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward: how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the LORD, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him: GOD also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the HOLY GHOST, according to His own will.” And this ministry of the LORD in His Church, is to prepare us for that universal dominion, inclusive of rule over angels, which He has called us to partake with Him in the age to come.

Heb. ii. 6—16. “For unto the angels He hath not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak, but one in a certain place testifieth, saying, What is MAN that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of Man that Thou visitest him?” Under the former dispensation, God used angels to reveal His mind to the Prophets, because the SON of GOD had not become the SON of Man. But from the time that CHRIST became incar-

nate, and constituted His Church on the day of Pentecost, they have not been so used: for S. Paul writes that He gave Apostles and Prophets as the foundation of His Church, unto whom He revealed what had been previously hidden, even from angels.

But we may further remark, that the word angel in this book is used *expressly* to denote ministers of CHRIST in His Church. The LORD JESUS Himself is called "The Angel of His presence." And there are angels in His Church who are the chief ministers of particular churches. And it is evident that the seven angels mentioned in Chapter xv. are also of this class; for they come out of the temple in heaven, clothed with Priestly robes, and with a golden girdle about their loins; resembling the dress of their High Priest, CHRIST JESUS, as He is described in the first chapter; indicating they are of the same order; He, the High Priest; they, Priests under Him; as it is written, "Thou hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests." We have dwelt at some length on this subject, because it involves an important point of doctrine, and greatly concerns the right interpretation of these prophecies.

The next point to which we will direct the attention of the reader, is no less important, and instructive. It is concerning the office of John the Apostle of the LORD, to whom this angel or messenger was sent, and "who bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of JESUS CHRIST, and of all things that he saw." The acts here recorded of him, clearly indicate the character of his office; the distinguishing features of which are, to bear *witness* of, to *testify* to, and *confirm* as with the seal of authority, any revelation which may be brought to the Church. Apostles bear the highest office under CHRIST. On them rests the great

Eph. iv. 11.  
1 S. Peter i.  
12.

1a. lxiii. 9.

Rev. ii. and  
iii.

responsibility of discerning both good and evil ; of testifying to the truth ; of preserving it in its purity, and of keeping the Church from all false doctrines and heresies. As the LORD JESUS CHRIST kept His Apostles in the truth whilst He was with them in the world, and none of them was lost, save the son of perdition ; even so should they who are called to so high an office, preserve and keep the Church pure and undefiled. “ As the FATHER sent Me into the world, even so send I *you*.” Every word and doctrine, therefore, delivered to the Church ought to have the stamp and seal of Apostleship to give it catholicity. And without such a witness and testimony to the truth, no word or doctrine, or revelation, should be received as from the LORD. This at least is God’s way and therefore the best, the safest, yea the only way in which the Church can be assured of the truth, and kept in security and peace. This being a doctrine of such fundamental and vital importance to the Church, it is taught us in the very commencement of this book ; and the Church has received it under the seal and testimony of Apostles, as from the LORD. He did not send it to the churches, or to the angels of the churches by the prophet-messenger, but to one bearing the office of an Apostle, and the Apostle sent it to the angels of the Seven Churches.

That which is here spoken of John, as bearing record of the word of God, and of the testimony of JESUS CHRIST, and of all things that he saw,” identifies him as the same John who wrote the Gospel and the Epistles which bear his name. The Gospel according to S. John opens with this testimony—“ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. By Him were all things made,

S. John xx.  
21.

S. John i. 1,  
3, 14.

and without Him was not any thing made that was made. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the FATHER, full of grace and truth." The Gospel by S. John thus introduced by His testimony or record of the Word of God, concludes in like manner concerning the things which he had stated therein. "These are written that ye might believe that JESUS is the SON of God, and that believing ye might have life through His Name." And of John it is thus related, "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true." The Epistles written by S. John, also bear this striking peculiarity of testimony. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the Word of life: For the Life was manifested and we have seen it, and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life which was with the FATHER, and was manifested unto us; That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the FATHER and with His SON JESUS CHRIST." And he ends this Epistle, which is one full of the testimony of JESUS CHRIST, with these words,—“And we know that the SON of GOD is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His SON JESUS CHRIST. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” In his second Epistle, he commends the Elect Lady and her children for walking in the truth, and whosoever *confesses not* that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh, he denounces as a

S. John xx.  
31.

S. John xxii.  
24.

1 S. John i.  
1—3.

1 S. John v.  
20, 21.

Verse 1 and  
9.

Verse 12.

deceiver and an Antichrist. Whilst in his third Epistle, he laments the fall and condemns the conduct of Diotrephes, he commends Demetrius, saying, "he hath a good report of all men, and of the truth itself; yea and we also *bear record*, and ye know that our record is true." Though a pre-eminence in bearing record of the Word of God, and testifying unto JESUS CHRIST, is given unto S. John in the Apocalypse, it does not derogate from the honour given to other Apostles, but only vindicates that especial honour to which this beloved disciple was advanced by CHRIST. As John is spoken of emphatically as "that disciple whom JESUS loved," though He loved all His disciples, so is he here spoken of as the Apostle, "who bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of JESUS CHRIST, and of all things that he saw." He it was, who reclined on the bosom of our LORD, and stood by His Cross, and testified of what he then saw of the two-fold stream of blood and water, which flowed from His side. Partaking thus largely of the mind and Spirit of CHRIST, and being faithful unto Him in all things, he was preferred before all his brethren to minister the Apocalypse to the Church. That which is here written of S. John may also relate to the record which he bare of JESUS CHRIST under the title of "*The* Word of God," both in regard to His Revelation now in the Church, and also to His future manifestation in glory, when He shall come forth with the armies of heaven. Our LORD appears to have given some intimation of this honour which should be conferred on His beloved disciple, when in answer to Peter's inquiry, "LORD and what shall this man do?" He said, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me." For John did tarry, and was pre-

Rev. i. 19, 20;  
xix. 13.

S. John xxi.  
22.



served alive upon the earth, till he beheld the LORD Who appeared unto him in His glory.

It is the office of Apostles also to bear witness to "The testimony of JESUS," which is "the spirit of Rev. xix. 10. prophecy." And prophecy is of no avail in the Church, unless there be Apostles also, to discern, direct, and apply the word : for otherwise men would only stumble the more, in being left to their own interpretation, and would become their own rulers, and shepherds, and have no protection against false prophets and seducing spirits. The testimony of Apostles together with the word of the Spirit is this twofold witness, which JESUS requires in His Church, and upon this foundation everything done in it should be established.

The commendation of the book, is that which next claims our attention. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that understand, (*ἀκούοντες*) the words of the prophecy of this book, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand." The book is given for blessing. And a peculiar blessing rests upon all who apply themselves to read and understand it ; who sincerely desire to know CHRIST as He is here revealed, and the things pertaining to His kingdom, as they are here pre-eminently set forth. For here, not only do we see the infinite love of CHRIST in redeeming us unto GOD by His own blood, but we also behold His glorious Person and attributes, as the CHRIST of GOD, in a way in which He had not heretofore been revealed to His Church. We here behold the glory that hath been given Him of the FATHER for His sufferings and death ; we see JESUS Who was for a little while made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour, seated on His throne—LORD of all

—all authority and power being given into His hands. Here too, we behold Him as the High Priest of our profession ; the care which He has over His Church ; how truly He is present with us in the Spirit ; how He meets with us in all His ordinances ; giving us the light of life, and feeding us with the food of immortality. The things, which the knowledge of this book reveals, are not abstractions, but living realities. Would that we knew more of them, and that the Church manifested forth the glory of the LORD JESUS as He is here revealed to our faith.

Those that read this book, with faith in the promised blessings ; shall most assuredly understand it. For it is given to the Church not only to be read, but also to be understood.

Let none presume then, to call this book unprofitable which God has pronounced most profitable. Let no one say it is a vain thing for Christians to read and search into its treasures, or attempt to understand its precious sayings. For God hath not written this book to mock the desire which He implants in the hearts of His children, and cultivates by promising them a blessing. He would not have said, *Read and understand*, unless He had given us the ability to do so. We dare not impute such things unto God ; for what He says He means ; and what He has promised He will fulfil.

The nature of the blessing which attends the reading and understanding of this prophecy, is intimated to us in the following words—“ and keepeth the things which are written therein.” This presupposes a heart rightly disposed, deeply interested in the things of CHRIST. And truly if we love the LORD JESUS CHRIST, we shall value above all things the Revelation which God hath given of Him. In proportion as we delight

in the things of JESUS CHRIST, we shall value them, and keep His words in our hearts, even as it is recorded of her whom all generations call Blessed; namely, that she kept His sayings, and pondered them in her heart. And in like manner those who keep the words of this prophecy shall attain unto the mind of CHRIST, and become of one Spirit with Him. S. Luke ii. 51.

Another motive presented to us for attending to the words of the prophecy is, that “*The time is at hand.*” If we suppose this revelation to relate only to the coming of our LORD, we shall not derive all the benefit it was intended to convey, and shall make it comparatively useless. For it sets before us events from the ascension of our LORD until the day of His appearing and kingdom. The Church had an immediate interest in this Revelation at its very commencement, and surely the experience of God’s dealings with her, and the world, for eighteen hundred years, must greatly increase the benefit which should be derived from the study of it, and lead us to see wherein we have departed from God, and His holy ways, and the things which are required to prepare us for His kingdom. For if the book is the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST,—if it is given to reveal Him to us in all His fulness, and to set before us His appearing and kingdom, and the consecutive events of the Christian age, which prepare for, and end in the completion of His purposes, *then*, those who read and understand this Revelation must be pre-eminently blessed. And there is reason to believe, that without careful heed to its instruction, we must lose sight of the glory which He now possesses; the constitution and ordinances of His Church; and His future glorious manifestation, when He shall come with all His saints to reign on the earth.

In concluding this part of the subject, let us remember that this book is *not sealed*, but is a *Revelation*. Let none presume to say otherwise, seeing that God has solemnly commanded that it should not be sealed, saying—“Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.” This Prophecy, then, must have been in course of fulfilment from that time until now, and must so continue till all that is herein written be fulfilled. We finally commend it to our readers, not as setting forth future uncertainties, but as teaching things than which nothing is more certain, and which will unquestionably prepare them for the greatest of all future events, even the glorious appearing and Kingdom of our LORD.

Rev. xxii. 10.

## PART II.

### ANALYSIS OF THE PROPHECY.

THE NECESSITY OF UNDERSTANDING ITS SYMBOLICAL LANGUAGE.  
THE INTERPRETATION OF ITS SYMBOLS. THE PROPHECY FOUR-  
FOLD. ITS SEVENFOLD DISTRIBUTION.

IN order to read the writings of any author, it is necessary, as we have before stated, that we should acquaint ourselves with the language he uses, or otherwise his book will be unintelligible. And to learn a language of which we are ignorant, we must begin first with its alphabet, and then go on to its grammar or construction. Not until we have accomplished this shall we be able to read, or to understand the meaning of such language. Even so, before we attempt to read and understand this book of the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, we must first acquaint ourselves with its figurative language, and learn its arrangement. To act otherwise, would be as absurd, as to suppose that we can read a book the language of which we had never learnt. Many however have sought to do this, and have, therefore, failed to give its true interpretation. That our endeavours, then, may not also fail, we will first ascertain the meaning of some of its leading symbols, and then set before the reader an outline of the construction and arrangement of the book itself. God, Who has promised to bless those who read and

understand it, has also furnished us with the means of construing its language, and therefore of obtaining a knowledge of its contents; and the Scriptures themselves are the source from whence we propose to gather the true meaning of its symbols, and learn the principles of its forms and arrangement.

We must perceive on the face of this book itself, that it contains **FOUR** principal and distinct forms or series of prophecy; and that each of these is **SEVEN-FOLD**. The first is given under the name of *Epistles*, being that form which intimates that they are of a Spiritual character; the second series under the name of *Seals*, relates to Civil and Political events; the third series under the name of *Trumpets*, has, as we shall see, an Ecclesiastical aspect; and the fourth series under the name of *Vials*, declares itself as being of a Judicial character. Now the question which arises in regard to this fourfold form or series of prophecy is, whether they are *collateral* or *sequential*, that is—whether they are in a course of fulfilment at one and the same time, or to be regarded as referring each to a different period of time, and so to follow one another in their fulfilment. To determine this question, we must seek for light, not only upon their internal construction, but also upon the meaning of their symbols.

In respect to the character of these several series, they are each sevenfold. The number seven, as we shall presently show from the Scriptures, is invariably used to represent completion, fulness, or perfection. And from the use of this number, we are led to infer that whatever action is represented under such a number of parts, that action must be complete and perfect of its kind, and must embrace the whole of that aspect or

view which is thus represented. This of itself would lead us to suppose that the events prophesied of cannot succeed each other, because in such a case, each of them would only describe a *part* of history in regard to its chronological order, and could not embrace any view as a whole or perfect theory. Moreover, we shall find, as we proceed, that the symbols themselves, (interpreted in the light of Scripture) represent very different things. For example, the *Seal* was an instrument always used in matters exclusively Civil, or in things relating to the rule or possession of the earth. The *Trumpet*, on the contrary, was an instrument appointed of God to be used for religious purposes, and by the Priests alone, and has therefore an Ecclesiastical character.

We may also remark here, that both the Seal and the Trumpet in the New Testament are applied in a mystical sense. In the Acts of the Apostles, for example, "Circumcision" is called, "the Seal of the Covenant which God made with Abraham," in reference to the possession of the land of Canaan; and the Seal of the HOLY SPIRIT S. Paul calls "the earnest of our inheritance" in reference to the kingdom of heaven which has yet to be revealed. Acts vii. 8.  
Eph. i. 13, 14.

In like manner the Trumpets are used symbolically both in the Old and New Testament. The Ascension of our LORD is spoken of in these words,—“God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a Trumpet.” And when He comes again, He is said “to descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and with the trump of God,” which S. Paul calls in his Epistle to the Corinthians, “the last Trump,” when the dead in CHRIST shall be raised. And it is also declared that “when the seventh Trum- Ps. xlvii.  
1 Thess. iv. 16.  
1 Cor. xv. 52.  
Rev. x. 7.

pet shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished. These applications of the Seal and Trumpet are sufficient to justify the remark, that these two symbols point to two distinct aspects or phases of history ; the one Civil, the other Ecclesiastical. And from the circumstance of each series being composed of seven parts, we are led to infer that the series of Seals represent the whole Civil phase of Christendom, from the beginning to the end of the dispensation ; and the series of Trumpets represent the whole Ecclesiastical phase, from the beginning to the end of the dispensation. And this view is confirmed by the circumstance of our LORD'S Ascension being said to be accompanied by the sound of a Trumpet ; and His second Advent being attended by the same symbolic representation.

The *Epistles*, being addressed to the then *spiritual* condition of the Seven Churches of Asia, we are led to conclude they have also the same application towards Christendom, when taken as prophetic of its history. The Epistolary form was that in which the Apostles always addressed the Churches in respect to their spiritual state.

The seven *Vials*, being called the vials of *wrath*, and the seven last plagues, indicate by their name that they represent the phase of God's judgments upon the apostate condition of the Church ; commencing with her first declension from the truth, when she left "her first love ;" which charge is brought against her in the first Epistle.

We have thus, *four* aspects or phases represented to us. And these four embrace every point of view in which the history of Christendom can be considered.

Another reason for believing that these four series present four distinct aspects of Christian history is,



that they are preceded by *four introductory visions*, which likewise present these four distinct aspects. In the vision preceding the Epistles, our LORD is represented as the Shepherd and Bishop of the Church, and arrayed in all the attributes of a spiritual oversight and rule; walking in the midst of His Churches, as a commander of the good and a rebuker of the evil which He discerns among them. In the vision preceding the Seals, the LORD is seen seated on a *throne*, with His Elders around Him, likewise seated upon thrones, and praising Him for thus being made kings and priests to reign upon the earth; casting their crowns at His feet, and saying that He alone is worthy to receive all blessing and honour, and glory, and power. The symbols in this introductory vision, connected with the *Seals*, clearly represent an aspect of Kingly rule and dominion; or relating to the possession and rule of the earth. In the vision preceding the Trumpets, the LORD is represented as performing the part of High Priest in the heavens, and offering incense with the prayers of all saints upon the Golden Altar, which is before God; and which act embraces every other Priestly act and service. In this introductory vision, connected with the series of Trumpets, the symbols represent an aspect exclusively *Ecclesiastical*. And it is not less remarkable, that in the visions preceding the *Vials*, the apostate state of Christendom is described in symbolical language, showing the *causes* for which God poureth out, by the instrumentality of angels, this series of judgments. The four forms of evil which are described as preceding the Vials, and bringing their judgments upon the earth, answer to, and are descriptive of, the power and working of Antichrist under each of the four aspects of Christian history as set forth in

this prophecy. That is to say—the Dragon appears in the heavens, the region of the *spiritual*; ever standing ready to devour the “man-child,” or spiritual seed of the Church; which is symbolized under the figure of a woman clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet, and twelve stars upon her head: all which symbols are of a *spiritual* character. “The Beast out of the sea,” is described by the symbols of the *earthly*, answering to the *Civil* phase; that is, he is likened to a bear, and the mouth of a lion, and certain other indications are given of this being a symbolic description of Antichristian rule as it is seen working in the kingdoms of the earth. “The Beast out of the earth with horns like a lamb,” indicates both by the symbolism used, as well as by the power which he exercises, that he is the representation of the spirit of Antichrist as seen working in the outward forms of the Church, and influencing its *Ecclesiastical* polity, which derives all its influence and power from the State. The fourth form of evil represented by the “*Image of the Beast*,” which is made to speak and live by this second beast, exhibits that Satanic form of Antichrist, which wrought at the commencement of the Christian age, and which remains to be perfected in the seventh period of its history, under the last head of Imperial Rome; who will be a devil-possessed man, and will cause himself to be worshipped as God, and who, with the false prophet that worketh miracles before him, shall be cast alive into the lake of fire.

The distinct characteristics thus given to the *four series* or *forms* of prophecy—first, by the interpretations of the symbols from Holy Scripture; secondly, by the character of the prefatory visions; thirdly, by each series being composed of seven parts, indicating

the completeness of the phase or aspect represented ; and fourthly, by the four forms of evil which answer to these four aspects of Christian history,—appear altogether to carry with them such an amount of evidence that this is the true arrangement and construction of these four streams of prophecy, that we conclude this is the true key, whereby we shall be able by the grace of God, and the help of His HOLY SPIRIT, to obtain that knowledge which this Revelation was intended to convey to the Church, and by means of which we shall be able to ascertain what has, and what has not been fulfilled of this wonderful prophecy.

The following prophetic Chart or Table, will give at one view, the plan we have here briefly laid down, with some of its leading symbols, as setting forth the seven great epochs in the history of the Church and of the world.

## A TABULAR VIEW, OR PROPHETIC CHART OF THE APOCALYPSE.

*The Epistles reveal the Spiritual ; the Seals, the Civil : the Trumpets, the Ecclesiastical ; and the Vials, the Judicial Phase of Christian History.*

THE SEVEN PERIODS OF THE CHRISTIAN AGE.	EPISTLES. SPIRITUAL PHASE.	SEALS. CIVIL PHASE.	TRUMPETS. ECCLESIASTICAL PHASE.	VIALS. JUDICIAL PHASE.
Prefatory chapters to the Epistles, Seals, Trumpets, & Vials.	Rev. i. 4-20.	Rev. iv. v. vii	Rev. viii. 2-5.	Rev. x. xi. 1-13 ; xii. xiii. xiv. xv.
<i>First Period.</i> The Primitive, or Apostolic.	Rev. ii. 1-7. Ephesus.	Rev. vi. 1, 2. White Horse.	Rev. viii. 6, 7. Hail and fire on the earth.	Rev. xvi. 1, 2. On the earth.
<i>Second Period.</i> Persecution under Roman Emperors.	Rev. ii. 8-11. Smyrna.	Rev. vi. 3, 4. Red Horse.	Rev. viii. 8, 9. Mountain burning with fire cast into the sea.	Rev. xvi. 3. On the sea.
<i>Third Period.</i> Christianity in con- nexion with the State.	Rev. ii. 12-17. Pergamos.	Rev. vi. 5, 6. Black Horse.	Rev. viii. 10, 11. Great star falls from heaven on rivers and fountains.	Rev. xvi. 4-7. On rivers and fountains.
<i>Fourth Period.</i> Papal Supremacy and Oppression.	Rev. ii. 18-29. Thyatira.	Rev. vi. 7, 8. Pale Horse.	Rev. viii. 12, 13. Third part of the sun, moon, and stars, darkened.	Rev. xvi. 8, 9. On the sun.
<i>Fifth Period.</i> Reformation and Pro- testantism.	Rev. iii. 1-6. Sardis.	Rev. vi. 9-11. Souls seen un- der the altar.	Rev. ix. 1-12. Star falls, bottomless pit opened.	Rev. xvi. 10, 11. On the seat of the beast.
<i>Sixth Period.</i> Infidelity and Libe- ralism.	Rev. iii. 7-13. Philadelphia.	Rev. vi. 12-17. Great earth- quake.	Rev. ix. 13-21. The four an- gels loosed in the Euphrates.	Rev. xvi. 12-16. On the river Euphrates.
<i>Seventh Period.</i> The Personal Anti- christ, that wicked one revealed.	Rev. iii. 14-22. Laodicea.	Rev. viii. 1. Silence in hea- ven for half an hour.	Rev. xi. 14-19. The kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of CHRIST.	Rev. xvi. 17-21. On the air.

The Christian Apostacy explained. Rev. xvii.  
Babylon described and foredoomed. Rev. xviii.  
Events connected with the Fall of Babylon, and the destruction of the Antichristian Army. Rev. xix.  
The next Dispensation, or the Millennial Age, or the reign of our LORD with His Saints on the earth. Rev. xx. 1-6.  
The end of the Millennial Age. Satan loosed. The general Resurrection and final Judgment ; when Death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire, and the heavens and the earth flee away. Rev. xx. 7-15.  
The new heavens and new earth, the Holy City, New Jerusalem, descends from God out of heaven. Rev. xxi. and xxii.

### PART III.

#### THE SYMBOLISM, AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE BOOK.

BELIEVING the interpretation of the Apocalypse to be founded on the principles we have laid down in the foregoing Part, as set forth in the Table, we will now endeavour to confirm and illustrate these principles more fully from the Holy Scriptures.

In referring then, to the principles upon which we propose to interpret the prophecy of this book, we remark in the first place concerning the *Epistles*, that these being addressed to only seven churches in Asia, when doubtless there were many more, the number intimates that they refer to the spiritual condition of the Church of CHRIST, from the beginning to the end of the dispensation. That is, they describe not only the spiritual condition of the churches to which they were written, and their application to the Catholic or Universal Church in all generations, from that time to the present, after a similar manner, but also, they are prophetic of seven distinct periods of its spiritual history, to each of which, according to its order and sequence, each Epistle has had an application, which no other of the series would bear at the time ; so that its commendations, admonitions, and promises, were as peculiar to

the period of which the Epistle was prophetic, as if they had been spoken at that time directly by the LORD from heaven, answering to, and corresponding so exactly with the condition of the Church and peculiarities of that period, as to show plainly and incontrovertibly its antetypical fulfilment. To understand, however, this application of the Epistles, it will be necessary, not only to trace a general outline of the Church's history, and to make this application of them, but also to give this interpretation in connexion with the other three prophetic streams, which apply to these same periods, and are given under the names of Seals, Trumpets, and Vials. These four streams of prophecy when combined together and rightly understood, will be found to contain a perfect history of the Christian Church, embracing every phase in its progress that can be presented to us.

That such is the natural construction of these prophecies; namely, that they present a fourfold phase of the history of Christendom from the beginning to the end of the dispensation, commends itself even to our understanding. Suppose for example, that any person acquainted with all the *events* of Christian history, and also with the *motives*, and *spirit* in which they originated, be required to write a general history of these events, and to append a dissertation on the spirit and character of the times in which they took place, and that he is fully competent to do all this; what would be the probable and common-sense way in which he would seek to accomplish such an undertaking? Would he not, when he came to reflect upon, and examine the heterogeneous materials which he had to combine together into one general history, be almost forced from necessity to separate and classify his sub-

jects, and arrange them into sections, chapters, and books, according as the subject might be? He would find some events to be of a *political* character, and belonging to Civil history; some purely *Ecclesiastical* or belonging to the Church, as an outward polity, distinct from the State; such as the assemblings and decrees of its councils; the record of its doctrines, discipline, heresies, schisms, &c. He would also have to record the acts of God's providence in extraordinary deliverances, or His judgments in famine, pestilence, sword, or earthquake; which are wholly independent of, and distinct from Civil and Ecclesiastical affairs, although they may be indications of either the blessing or judgment of God upon the uprightness or iniquity of men engaged in them. And to this must be added the *philosophy* of the history, or an inquiry into the *spirit and character* of the times which had produced such events. All these things must be related, but could not be mixed together without confusion. And therefore no historian of any note has ever attempted to do so. Gibbon, Mosheim, and Milner, in their histories illustrate what we mean. Gibbon's history is an example of the Civil phase of a part of Christian history, unmingled with the Ecclesiastical, which is reserved for a separate narrative. Mosheim, on the other hand, gives us the history of the Church as distinct from the State, and only relates its acts as they have reference to, or bear upon the history of the Church. Milner pursues neither of these tracks, but professes to give the history of the spiritual part of the Church, or that part which he considers as such, without reference to Church and State affairs, except so far as they are mixed up with the history of this spiritual seed, or rather protesting body of Christian men

against outward corruptions. And it will be found, that no phase of Christian history can be narrated without mixing up with it other events which in their character and in their origin, are distinct from the history related.

We have instances of this in the Gospels, and Acts of the Apostles, in which the acts of Roman governors and Jewish priests are related, when neither the Gospel or Acts were written to give us the history of either the one or the other; but only of the founder of Christianity, and of those who immediately succeeded Him. That the things which S. John was commanded to write, were so classified and arranged, and that distinct phases or streams of history are given in these visions, will become more evident as we proceed with the interpretation of the emblems and imagery of this book.

In looking at the general history of Christendom, it presents to the Christian mind a fourfold phase, which may be called the *Spiritual*, the *Political*, the *Ecclesiastical*, and the *Judicial*. We are led first to consider the spiritual state of mankind, because we see in this state an explanation of the outward acts and events which happen among them. There is next, the outward form in which this spiritual condition manifests itself in human actions. And this has a twofold aspect according as the Ministers of the Church or of the State are the actors, which brings out the Civil and Ecclesiastical phases of Christian history. We are next led to trace the consequences of these outward acts either in blessing or judgment upon the agents engaged in them, or upon the people who are affected by them. For although there is a sense in which wrath is reserved for the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men, yet it is also true, that a present visitation of God's



righteous judgments does come upon evil deeds, and wicked purposes when brought into manifestation, as well as that present blessings are realized by those who do, and encourage righteous acts, both upon themselves and upon those who are partakers in them.

Seeing then, that the history of Christendom can be presented to us under a fourfold division or phase, we will bring before the reader some of the Scripture evidences of the truth of this theory, and see whether the four streams of prophecy given us under the name of the Epistles, Seals, Trumpets, and Vials, do not from their character, and emblematic forms, present to us this fourfold phase, under one or other of which every other vision of this book may be arranged and find its place.

First, as to the EPISTLES. The reason for believing that the Epistles, addressed to the Seven Churches, present the SPIRITUAL phase of Christian history is, that the Epistolary form is that in which all the Apostles of whom we have any record, have chosen to address the Churches concerning their spiritual condition. For though in these Epistles many directions and rules are given, for the outward conduct and discipline of the Church, yet they are all in connection with, and are illustrative of, the spiritual state of the people to whom they were written. None of the Epistles are addressed to the world but to the Church,—to a people in covenant with God—to those who are baptized into CHRIST, and made partakers of His grace. Thus the Epistle to the Romans is addressed, “To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints.” Does S. Paul write to the Corinthians? his Epistle is not addressed to them as a people or a body-politic, but unto “The Church of God, which is at

Corinth, to them that are sanctified in CHRIST JESUS, called to be saints with all that in every place call upon the name of JESUS CHRIST our LORD, both theirs and ours." And so of the rest of the Epistles, "Unto the Churches of Galatia."—"To the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in CHRIST JESUS."—"To all the saints in CHRIST JESUS which are at Philippi with the Bishops and Deacons."—"To the saints and faithful brethren in CHRIST which are at Colosse."—"Unto the Church of the Thessalonians which is in GOD the FATHER and in our LORD JESUS CHRIST." In like manner does S. Peter address his Epistles, "To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of GOD the FATHER, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of JESUS CHRIST." So the Seven Epistles in this prophecy are not addressed to the rulers of the world but of the Churches; to those who have spiritual oversight and rule; to angels of the Churches. We conclude, therefore, that the Epistles contain the history of Christendom in its *spiritual* aspect, because they are sent to the Church, and because it is in this form, all the saints and churches have ever been addressed by those having authority to do so, and who wrote under the direction and inspiration of the Spirit of God. And it is also manifest from the subject matter of these Seven Epistles, that they were composed and written to meet the spiritual condition of the Churches to which they were addressed; and intended for encouragement, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness.

In the next place, with regard to the SEALS. They are evidently used in all holy Scripture in relation to

Civil or Kingly authority. The first mention we have of the Seal is in Genesis xxxviii. 18, where it is related that Judah pledged his seal with his bracelets and staff to Tamar his daughter-in-law. The seal is next mentioned in Genesis xli. 42, where we are told that Pharaoh took his ring from off his hand and put it upon the hand of Joseph, which act was a principal circumstance in Joseph's investiture with the high office of chief Minister of the king of Egypt, as by the delivery of the ring Pharaoh delegated to Joseph the chief authority of the State, because it gave validity to the documents to which it was affixed. In like manner the king of Persia gave his seal ring to his successive ministers, Haman, and Mordecai, and its use is especially declared; "The writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse." Esther viii. 9. The possession of such a ring gave absolute power in all things to the person to whom it was entrusted. This use of the Seal has come down even to the present day, as it is frequently used amongst ourselves to give validity to a legal instrument or a public document. And still more perhaps this is seen in the use of the *Great Seal*, the person holding it being nominally, at least, the second person in the State. Our use of the seal, however, does not perfectly illustrate the use of it as it existed in the East, because we require the signature as well as the seal; whereas, in the East, the seal alone had the same effect which we give to both the seal and the signature; for one man, therefore, to give to another his seal, was to give him the use of that authority and power which his own signature possessed. And this, probably, was that which occasioned Judah's anxiety about the seal which he had pledged to Tamar. The same use was

1 Kings xxi.  
8.

made of the seal by the kings of Israel. When Ahab coveted the vineyard of Naboth, and Jezebel his wife wrote letters to the elders of Israel to condemn Naboth, she sealed them with the king's seal, showing that she acted by authority. So in all Civil contracts among the Jews, the conveyance of a possession was effected by two original documents, one of which was sealed, and deposited in some public office, and the other was kept for reference by the person for whose benefit the contract was made. Under the Persian monarchy also,

Jer. xxxii.  
10.

Vide Daniel  
vi. 15.

the seal was used to give validity and authority to the acts of the State. Thus when Daniel was cast into the den of lions, "the king sealed the stone on the mouth of the den with his own signet, and the signet of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed." The seal was also understood by all persons in the days of our LORD, to give the impress of Civil rule and supreme authority, as may be gathered from the fact of sealing the stone of the sepulchre under authority derived from Pilate, the Roman governor, who according to the request made to him by the Jews, gave them the power to make the sepulchre sure—"So they went and made the sepulchre sure, *sealing* the stone and setting a watch." We learn then from the holy Scriptures, that the seal was used by the Patriarchs, the kings of Israel, of Babylon, of Persia, and by the Roman governors, not on religious or Ecclesiastical matters, but only in the affairs of the State, or in Civil contracts. This use of it has also come down to us, even to our own times. Nor does it appear that there is an instrument more ancient, or one that has been more universally used to give validity to transactions appertaining to the affairs of this life.

S. Matt.  
xxvii. 66.

Moreover, in the application of this symbol in a *figurative* sense, it will be found to have reference primarily to earthly possession either in the present world or in that which is to come. *Circumcision*, which is called "*the Seal of the covenant which God made with Abraham*," had especial relation to the land of Canaan, which God gave to him, and to his seed for an everlasting possession, and without this seal as the mark of God's covenant, no Jew could inherit it. In the new covenant also, under the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST, the gift of the HOLY GHOST, is called, "*the Seal and earnest of our inheritance*," which we are to hold until the redemption of the purchased possession, relating as it does, to the redeemed earth, and to that day when "*the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our LORD and of His CHRIST, and He shall reign for ever and ever*." So the Seal when used even in the figurative sense, has reference to kingly rule and possession. And we shall see as we proceed with our subject that it is used in this sense in "*the sealing of the twelve tribes*," in the seventh chapter of this book, where it is called "*the Seal of the living God*;" and the judgments of God are stayed, till His servants are sealed in their foreheads. And being thus sealed, they are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, to be revealed in the last times, when they shall come with CHRIST to reign on the earth.

Gen. xvii. 9  
—14; Rom.  
iv. 11—13.

Eph. i. 13, 14.

We might multiply evidence from the Scriptures in proof of this use of the Seal as an instrument of Civil authority, but from the quotations already made, it appears evident, that under the symbol of SEALS is contained the CIVIL phase of Christian history, or a prophecy concerning those outward events which shall take place among the kingdoms of this

world in connection with the Church of CHRIST, and which shall precede and usher in the kingdom of our LORD.

The next symbol used in the arrangement of the four-fold form of prophecy, is that of "the TRUMPET." In referring again to the holy Scriptures for the interpretation of this symbol, we shall find both from its origin and use, that it is purely *Ecclesiastical*, that is, it was an instrument used to indicate the action of the Church as a body, and consequently so far as the Church is in its outward constitution a polity distinct from the State, so far the action represented by the trumpets is distinct from, although it is mixed up with, and follows the analogy of the seals in their outward actions.

The first mention of the Trumpet is in the nineteenth Chapter of the book of Exodus. And the circumstances connected with its introduction as here recorded, claim our attention. In the third month, when the children of Israel were come forth out of the land of Egypt, and were encamped before Mount Sinai, Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine; and ye shall be unto Me, a kingdom of *Priests*, and an holy nation. And it came to pass on the morning of the third day after Moses descended from the Mount, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the Mount, and

*the voice of the Trumpet* exceeding loud, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when *the Voice of the Trumpet* sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. In the next Chapter which records the giving of the law it is said, that “all the people *saw* the thunders, and the lightnings, *and the noise of the Trumpet.*” Ex. xx. 18. Now the giving of the law from Mount Sinai, as stated in the twentieth and eleven following chapters, includes the Ten Commandments, and the pattern of the Tabernacle, and all the statutes and ordinances to be observed by the children of Israel. And S. Paul tells us, that all these Heb. iii. 5; viii. ix. 23. were given as a shadow of heavenly things, i.e., of the Church of CHRIST. And referring to the giving of the law from Mount Sinai, as typical of that better covenant which God hath made with us in CHRIST JESUS, he says, “See that ye refuse not Him that Heb. xii. 25 —29. speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth, but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that may be shaken as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with

reverence and godly fear ; For our God is a consuming fire." Here the Apostle typically applies the whole transaction of the giving of the law, when the Trumpet was first sounded to the Christian Church, showing most clearly, that the Trumpet must be regarded as an *Ecclesiastical* emblem. The sounding of the Trumpet on this occasion is strikingly analogous to its first introduction in the Revelation. In the former it is called "*the voice of the Trumpet,*" and it is also said, "*the people saw the noise, of the Trumpet.*" In the latter, John says, that he heard a "*great voice as of a Trumpet,*" and that he turned *to see the voice* that spake with him.

Moreover, this Trumpet was an instrument appointed to be used in the *service and worship of God*. And among  
 Levit. xxiii the festivals to be observed, was the "*Feast of Trumpets,*" or "*a memorial of the blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.*" This feast was kept in "*the seventh month,*" and the day on which it was held was to be a Sabbath—a day of rest. In the tenth chapter of Numbers, we find that the blowing of the trumpet was assigned to the *Priests* who ministered before the LORD. "*And the sons of Aaron, the Priests, shall blow with the trumpets ; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations.*" They were blown at the new moon, over their burnt offerings, and over the sacrifice of their peace offerings, and also on the great day of atonement. The language of the *Prophets* also in relation to the trumpet, gives it an ecclesiastical application. The LORD, speaking by  
 Isa. l. 1. Isaiah, says, "*Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.*" Thus also  
 Joel ii. 1 and 15. by Joel, "*Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an*



alarm in My holy mountain : let all the inhabitants of the land tremble ; for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand." And that we may not weary our readers with unnecessary quotations, we will only remark further, that when the LORD appeared to John, and gave him these revelations, it was as the *Priest* and *Bishop* of His Church. And S. John describes the voice of the LORD "as the voice of a trumpet talking with him."

We thus find, by referring to the numerous passages of Scripture in which the trumpet is mentioned, that it was an instrument, not only expressly instituted by God, but that its use indicated His special direction as the ruler and guide of His people. We find also that the Priests alone were permitted to use it, even when the Israelites went out to war with the nations ; which circumstance of itself appears sufficient to stamp its character as a Church symbol, and the nation as Theocratic. And also, as the trumpet was an instrument used by the Priests in the Jewish worship, and for guidance and direction, so the ministers or priests of the LORD, are used by the inspiration of His HOLY SPIRIT in the guidance and direction of the Church, and in offering her solemn worship unto God.

The only mention of the trumpet in the New Testament, where it is used like the seal figuratively, (except in the Apocalypse,) is in connexion with the Advent of our LORD, when He comes to raise His saints ; which figurative allusion is in perfect harmony and analogy with its literal use in the former dispensation. From these considerations, it appears evident that the *Ecclesiastical* phase of Christian history is revealed to us under the *Trumpet* series.

The *VIALS* represent the *JUDICIAL* phase of Christian

history. The only instance recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures, in which a vial is mentioned as being used for inflicting judgment on a people, is in the case of Saul, when Samuel anointed him to be King of Israel. We are told in the seventh chapter of the first book of Samuel, that the Israelites sinned greatly against God in asking a king to be placed over them, when the LORD their God was their King. And "the thing displeased Samuel," or as it reads in the margin, "*was evil in his eyes*," when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed unto the LORD, and the LORD said unto Samuel, "Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected ME, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken ME, and served other gods; so do they also unto thee." And Samuel reasoned with them before the LORD concerning their wickedness in asking for a king. And to convince them of their sin, and that they might know how greatly they had provoked the LORD to anger, He confirmed the words of Samuel, and answered his prayer by sending them in the time of wheat harvest thunder and rain. Every departure from God, and His holy ways necessarily brings wrath. And that it was so in this case, independently of the circumstances narrated, is revealed to us by the Prophet Hosea. "And after they had had many kings to reign over them, the LORD said, O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in ME is thine help. I will be thy King: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and

1 Sam. x. 1.

Verses 6-9.

princes. I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath."

Now, the *Vial* was the instrument in the hands of Samuel the Priest, whereby the LORD anointed Saul to be king over His people Israel. Whilst, therefore, the oil used on this occasion was expressive of the grace and authority conferred upon Saul to rule over God's people, the act of pouring out the oil from the vial indicated the displeasure of the LORD, showing that the *vial* was used in this case as an *instrument of judgment*. The use, then, of the first vial, recorded in the Scriptures, was an act of judgment, and was poured out by one who served at the altar—a *Priest* as well as *Prophet* of the LORD. And in like manner the angels who pour out the Apocalyptic vials are represented as exercising this twofold office. It inflicted God's righteous judgment on His people, and was the punishment of their sin in asking for a king when the LORD Himself was their King. We believe this act of God throws considerable light upon the mystery of His judgments in the vials of wrath in the Apocalypse; and that the cause of these judgments will be found to be very analogous to the causes which brought judgment upon Israel. For as the children of Israel rejected the LORD from being their King, when they rejected Samuel, so the Christian Church, departing from the way of the LORD as given in its original constitution, at Pentecost, rejected Him as their Ruler when they rejected Apostles. They began in the Spirit, but failing of the grace of God sought to be made perfect by the flesh. They preferred the rule of the flesh to that of the SPIRIT of the LORD in His rulers. We infer, therefore, that the mystery of the vials is to be seen in the history of Saul, to which we have here referred; but

be this as it may, it is of no consequence in determining their character. For no other proof is needed Rev. xvi. 1 ;  
and xv. 1. beyond the statement in which they are called "*vials of wrath*," and "the seven last plagues in which is filled up the wrath of ALMIGHTY GOD," to show that they imply judgment.

Other evidence, that the arrangement we have made of this fourfold form of Prophecy, revealed in this book, is the true one, will arise out of the interpretation of the symbolic action contained in each series ; and also of the introductory visions, whose emblems and imagery indicate, and illustrate the phase or aspect of history represented by them. Each of the series also, being, as we have already remarked, composed of seven parts, indicates that the phase which the series presents, is perfect of its kind, and embraces the whole period of the dispensation.

## PART IV.

PREFATORY VISIONS TO EACH OF THE FOUR FORMS OF PROPHECY; NAMELY, TO THE SEVEN EPISTLES, SEVEN SEALS, SEVEN TRUMPETS, AND SEVEN VIALS.

THAT these four forms or streams of prophecy present to us a fourfold phase of Christian history, will appear further evident, by considering the prefatory visions to each of these series; and in so doing, we shall find that they are of the same character with the series which follow. Thus the vision which precedes the Epistles is of a spiritual character, representing the LORD JESUS as the Shepherd and Bishop of His Church. The prefatory vision to the seals exhibits the regal power and dominion of the LORD; whilst the one introducing the trumpets evidently represents Him in a priestly or ecclesiastical character. And the vials are prefaced by the symbolic forms of those evil things which cause the judgments, and bring down the wrath of GOD upon His people. Let us then consider these Prefaces in order.

4 John to the Seven Churches which are in Asia; Grace *be* unto you, and peace from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne. Rev. i. 4—20.

5 And from JESUS CHRIST, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the

earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto GOD and His FATHER; to Him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7 Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they *also* which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the LORD, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

9 I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of JESUS CHRIST, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of GOD and for the testimony of JESUS CHRIST.

10 I was in the Spirit on the LORD's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; and, what thou seest write in a book, and send *it* unto the Seven Churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me; and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks.

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14 His head and *His* hairs *were* white, like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes *were* as a flame of fire.

15 And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters.

16 And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength.

17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last.

18 I *am* He that liveth, and was dead: and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the Seven Churches : and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the Seven Churches.

“John to the seven Churches which are in Asia.” There are many numbers used in this book in a mystical sense, and among these numbers, none so frequently occurs as the number *seven*, which is always used with the same signification denoting completeness, totality, perfection, deriving this meaning, as we conceive from the idea contained in the Hebrew root itself, שבע, which signifies fulness, completion, and therefore we have the number seven used in Scripture whenever any whole or perfect thing is intended to be represented.

And S. John being commanded to address these seven Churches only, when there must have been many more not only in this province but in the nations around, leads us to conclude that these seven are taken to represent the whole Church of CHRIST on earth.

The preface to the seven Epistles opens with a benediction from the Triune JEHOVAH, in these words—

“Grace be unto you, and peace from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come ; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne, and from JESUS CHRIST, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.” This benediction is full of significance, especially as it is pronounced at the commencement of the revelation. “*Grace*” is that peculiar attribute or quality which God hath ever manifested towards His fallen creatures, and which was fully revealed when His SON condescended to take upon Himself our

nature, and came to fulfil the FATHER's will, and to give Himself a ransom for us. As it is stated in the New Testament, "the law was written by Moses, but grace and truth came by JESUS CHRIST." "Ye know the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, Who, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be made rich." "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of GOD: not of works lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in CHRIST JESUS unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." This benediction, therefore, is not only expressive of the non-imputation of guilt, and of the peace of GOD, which arises through faith in the shed blood of JESUS CHRIST; but also of the grace which He bestows upon us now that He is exalted to the right hand of GOD. He gives us grace to apprehend what is the hope of our calling. Grace to read, to understand, and to keep the sayings of the prophecy of this book. And the peace which proceeds from GOD, is GOD's own peace—the peace which the HOLY GHOST the Blessed COMFORTER imparts; CHRIST's own peace, which He Himself bequeathed; as He said before He ascended—

S. John xiv. 27. "My peace give I unto you." When the Apostle, S. John xx. 19. therefore, says, "Grace be unto you and peace," he expresses the very mind of GOD toward us, and if we receive them in faith, the very substance of these blessings will arise in our hearts, and we shall *know* the grace and peace which proceed from the GOD of all grace and consolation.

"From Him which is, and which was, and which is to come;" i.e., from the FATHER, Whose eternity is spoken of in relation to the SON, Whose office it is to



reveal Him, and who is afterwards mentioned. For out of, or apart from the SON, we can form no idea of the invisible FATHER. We know the FATHER by knowing the SON. "No man hath seen God at any time, S. John i. 18. the only begotten SON, Who is in the bosom of the FATHER, He hath declared Him." "He is the brightness of the FATHER's glory and the express image of His Person." "He that hath seen ME (saith our LORD,) hath seen the FATHER." Heb. i. 1-3. And it is in the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, which God gave unto Him, that we especially behold the glory of the FATHER. And whilst these words declare Him with Whom the present, the past, and the future, are the same, they appear also to refer to three distinct periods of manifestation; that is,—as He *is now* revealed unto us in CHRIST glorified, by the HOLY GHOST sent down from heaven; as He *was* revealed from the beginning in "The Word," S. John xv. 26. and when "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us;" S. John i. 1, 14. and as He *shall* be revealed when the LORD JESUS CHRIST shall come in the glory of the FATHER. S. Mark xiv. 62.

The next person in the Godhead presented to our faith, is the HOLY GHOST, under the name of "The Seven Spirits which are before His throne." This expression is to be understood according to what was previously spoken of the Seven Churches, as denoting totality, fulness, perfection; and therefore in regard to the HOLY GHOST, it denotes the fulness of His Godhead. It represents Him in His distributiveness and unity—as the *One* ever blessed SPIRIT, pervading, filling, and dwelling in the Church, which is the body of CHRIST, the fulness of Him which filleth all in all. Thus as the universality and unity of the mystical body of CHRIST is represented by seven churches, so

S. John xiv. 15-20.

the Unity of the HOLY GHOST in His distribution is represented by Seven Spirits.

That these Seven Spirits denote the HOLY GHOST, will appear evident if we consider the place they occupy in the passage before us : for they are associated in the benediction in unity with the FATHER and the SON. And it is still more evident that no creature of God, be he angelic or human, can stand in this connexion, or possess an equality with the FATHER and the SON. The benediction proceeds alike from the THREE ; which would be impossible were they not co-equal, as well as ONE GOD.

The peculiarity of the benediction also claims our attention. For the benedictions of the Apostles in their Epistles omit the name of the HOLY GHOST, and mention only the FATHER and the SON. The reason of this distinction appears to be that in the apostolic Epistles, the HOLY GHOST is the testifier, and therefore testifieth not of Himself ; but this book being the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST—not only CHRIST revealing, but CHRIST revealed—the three persons in the Godhead are proper to that Revelation, and therefore these names are mentioned.

Another peculiarity in the construction of this passage is, that the name of the HOLY GHOST precedes that of JESUS CHRIST ; which may be to render emphatic the truth of His Incarnation, and to present it at the opening of this book, as the foundation of all revelation.

“ And from JESUS CHRIST, Who is the faithful witness.” He was named JESUS when He was conceived by the HOLY GHOST, and was so called because He should save His people from their sins. In the wonderful humiliation of the SON of God, in taking our

S. Matt. i.  
18—25 : S.  
Luke i. 30—  
36.

nature upon Him, and being made man, we see how closely God has united Himself to us, for our salvation; and when He had purged our sins with His own blood, He ascended into heaven, and received of the FATHER the gift of the HOLY GHOST for His Church, which, on the day of Pentecost He shed down upon the little company who were assembled in expectation of receiving Him. And thus the Holy Anointing Oil, which had been poured upon the head of our Aaron, came down upon His beard, even unto the skirts of His garments; and every member of the mystical CHRIST receives this Unction of the Holy One, that by His anointing he may know all things, even this Revelation, which God has given unto His Church.

“The Faithful Witness,” or martyr. This expresses that He bare witness unto the truth both by word and deed, even unto the death, and sealed His testimony with His blood. For being questioned of Pilate, when He stood at his judgment seat, saying—“Art Thou a King then?” JESUS replied,—“Thou sayest that I am a King; for this end was I born, and for this end came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.” And when the High Priest said unto Him, “I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the CHRIST, the SON of the Blessed?” JESUS answered, “Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto thee, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” Thus was He the faithful witness unto the truth; and for this witness they put Him to death. The words *ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός*, are the same as applied to Antipas in the Epistle to the Church at Pergamos, and refer to his martyrdom. Those who attain unto the “first resurrection” are described as having in them

Acts i. and ii.

S. John xviii. 37.

S. Mark xvi. 61.

S. Matt. xxvii. 63—67.

this spirit of witnessing for the truth even unto martyrdom. John saw under the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the Word of God and the testimony which they held. And in the twentieth chapter we read that he saw the souls of them which had been beheaded for the witness of JESUS, and for the Word of God, and they lived and reigned with CHRIST a thousand years. We are also told that those who prevailed to cast Satan out of heaven, overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony, and by not loving their lives unto the death. S. Paul manifested also the same spirit ; when he said he accounted all things but as dross, and even his life not dear unto him, so that he might win CHRIST, and be found in Him, if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection *from* the dead. S. John was also following in the same footsteps as "The faithful martyr:" for he was then suffering persecution and banishment for the Word of God and for the testimony of JESUS CHRIST. There should be in *us* also the same spirit of bearing witness unto the truth ; for if we suffer with CHRIST we shall also reign with Him ; if we deny Him, He will deny us.

"The First Begotten from the dead." This designation given of our LORD is full of important meaning. It presents Him to us in the glorious aspect of being our Prototype and Hope—as the Resurrection, and the Life manifested. Death is the condition of the fallen creature, and into that condition CHRIST willingly came, that through death He might overcome him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage. Dying, as He did, in the truth of our nature, and in our nature rising again,

we have at once a pledge and earnest of our resurrection also. "He rose from the dead as the first-fruits of them that slept." But this could not have been the case, if He had not, in our nature, overcome death and risen again. Having proved Himself "The Faithful Witness," even unto death, He was raised from the dead by the glory of the FATHER. Thus life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel. And we are not taught to look for death, but for resurrection to life. This is the faith which overcometh the world and the hope which purifieth; which the Church held fast at the beginning, but which declined when she left her first love, till "the resurrection from the dead" was nearly lost sight of as a present and joyful expectation.

In this name—"The First Begotten from the dead"—is clearly intimated, that no man before the Resurrection of the LORD JESUS had been raised from the dead in an immortal body. And the fact throws much light on a subject connected with the coming and kingdom of our LORD, which would be otherwise dark and mysterious, as regards the condition of those who will not be raised at His coming. The transfiguration of our blessed LORD on the Mount, we know, was typical of His coming in glory with His saints. We are told by three of the Evangelists, that two men were present with JESUS in this vision of His glory, from the invisible world;—Moses and Elias who were seen conversing with Him. Elias had not tasted of death, having been carried away in a chariot of fire into heaven. Moses, (if we believe the testimony of Scripture concerning him,) *died* and was *buried*, and was *gathered unto his people*, as *Aaron his brother had been gathered*. So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the

<sup>1</sup> Cor. xv.  
20.

Rom. vi. 4.

Compare S.  
John ix. 27,  
36; 2 S. Pet.  
ii. 15—18.

Num. xxvii.  
13; xxxi. 9.  
Deut. xxxiv.

land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." And the Scriptures do not give us any authority for saying the LORD raised him from the dead. If indeed he was raised from the dead, when he appeared on the Mount, his body must have been either in a mortal or immortal condition. Now it is not consistent to believe he was in a *mortal* body, since we are told that he died and was buried fifteen hundred years before. And if we suppose him to have received an *immortal* body over which death had no more power, then JESUS could not have been the "first begotten from the dead" as it is here declared that He is. Admitting therefore neither of these suppositions, we conclude that we have presented to us on the mount of transfiguration these two of the servants of God in two conditions of being, one in a body and the other not. But both of them "appeared in glory and talked with Him." This example affords a direct proof that the soul of man can be with CHRIST, and be able to converse with Him in His glory, without a body; to the overthrow of the doctrine of the materialist, as well as that of a very numerous class of Christian men, who believe that the soul cannot act without the body, but sinks at death into a state of unconsciousness, and must so remain until the resurrection.

The light we gather from this vision is therefore very instructive, for by it we learn, that there will be two classes of people with the LORD in His glorious kingdom; the one, consisting of the raised and changed saints in bodies fashioned like unto CHRIST's glorious body; the other, of those who though with Him are

disembodied, and whose condition therefore is not so glorious as that of those who attain to the first resurrection; for they receive a body in order to reign with CHRIST, while "the rest of the dead live not again." Rev. xx. 5. No, not even those who are written in the Lamb's book of life, until the thousand years be finished. *All* the saints will be with the LORD in His kingdom, though they will not all reign with Him. He has had many faithful servants who are now departed, of whom all will not be accounted worthy of the first resurrection. This was a prize which S. Paul earnestly sought, (endowed as he was with the HOLY GHOST, and an Apostle of the LORD) if by any means he might attain it. And if we also would attain unto this glory we must seek it as S. Paul did, advancing daily unto a meetness for it, and running as in a race, for this prize of our high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS.

These two classes appear to be referred to by S. Paul in the fourth chapter of his second Epistle to the Thessalonians, where he speaks of "the dead in CHRIST," and "those that sleep in JESUS." These are not synonymous terms. "*The dead in CHRIST* shall be *raised* first, and those that *sleep in JESUS* will God bring with Him." *The dead in CHRIST*, are words used by the Apostle to denote persons in a certain spiritual condition, even that of being partakers of the same Holy Anointing, wherewith He Himself was anointed. "Those that *sleep in JESUS*" do not necessarily attain unto this, although they are *saved*, as the expression implies. These also, "will God bring with Him," though not in resurrection bodies, but as Moses was when he appeared with Elias on the Mount at our LORD's transfiguration. Those that "sleep in JESUS," are doubtless even now present with CHRIST, holding

Verse 13—  
14.

personal communion with Him, and with each other. Why then should not this continue in the Kingdom?

“The Prince of the kings of the earth.” The arrangement of these names, like that of the prophecy itself, appears to be intended to throw additional light upon their true meaning: for as the name of “The faithful and true Witness,” refers to the humiliation of the LORD while upon the earth, in mortal flesh; and His Name, “The first begotten from the dead,” exhibits Him as having entered into the presence of God as our High Priest, so this name, “The Prince of the kings of the earth,” reveals to us that He will yet be manifested as the LORD of all—the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings and LORD of lords. And when He shall be openly manifested as *King*, He shall have the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. All kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him. And those who shall be accounted worthy to reign with Him in His kingdom, shall be kings and priests unto God and the Lamb. That we may attain unto this glory, it is well we should consider the order in which these names are given to CHRIST: for in this order they must apply in any case to His disciples who desire to partake of this Melchisedec Priesthood, and to reign with Him in His kingdom. We must first become *faithful witnesses* unto the truth, even as He witnessed for it upon the earth. We must count all things but dross and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST, and press forward to the mark for the prize of our high calling, that we may be also like Him in His resurrection. We must rejoice in that He is Priest after the order of Melchisedec; that He giveth us the true bread and wine which sustains our

Vide Heb.  
vii. and viii.  
Gen. xiv. 18,  
&c.  
S. John vi.  
53—57.



spiritual life, even His most precious body and blood, so that we may be filled with His grace and heavenly benediction, and be able to render unto Him the "tithes of all" as the outward and visible token that we acknowledge Him as LORD, and present ourselves <sup>Rom. xii. 1, 2.</sup> to Him a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable in His sight. And thus, with heartfelt recognition of His grace and goodness to us, we shall be able to join with the holy Apostle in the following doxology, saying:—

"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto GOD and His FATHER, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." How wonderful is this love, that He should take us, fallen as we are, and polluted with sin, and cleanse us from our iniquity and defilement, even in His own blood, to make us inheritors with Him of His kingdom and glory. These unspeakable mercies were shadowed forth by the ceremonial observances under the law, and as the sons of Levi were washed, cleansed, and anointed, ere they could serve unto the shadow of heavenly things in the Priest's Office, so must we be "washed, and justified, and sanctified in the Name" <sup>1 Cor. vi. 11.</sup> of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and by the SPIRIT of our God," before we can offer unto GOD spiritual sacrifices now, or hereafter sit with Him on His throne as kings and priests unto GOD, and His FATHER.

"Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen." It is the coming of the LORD in glory and majesty which is here declared. The mind of the Apostle glances beyond the previous events of the LORD's Advent to the time when the Son of Man

shall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. The same event is declared by the prophet Daniel, “And behold, one like unto the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him, and there was given Him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, and nations, and kindreds should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

Dan. vii.

S. Matt.  
xxvii. 64.

“Behold, He cometh!” But *how* does He come? The Apostle says, “*with clouds.*” He cometh with clouds. Such also was the declaration of our blessed LORD before the Jewish Sanhedrim. “Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” What then are the clouds in which the Son of Man comes? We believe that He will come literally in the clouds of heaven. For we are told that when the disciples were

Acts i. 9—11.

assembled together on the day of His Ascension into heaven, while they beheld He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven, as He went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen Him go into heaven.”

We gather, from the same infallible source, that He will also come in the *cloud of glory*, of which the Shechina, or visible glory in which the LORD dwelt between the cherubims of old, and which filled the temple at its dedication, was a type. We read in the Gospel, that our LORD’s transfiguration on the Mount was given to

show to the three chosen disciples, who were with Him, "that the kingdom of heaven should come with power," and we are expressly told on that occasion, that "*a bright cloud* overshadowed them," and the disciples feared as they entered into the cloud. And the Apostle Peter desiring that the Church might be able, after his decease, to have these things always in remembrance, says, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, but were eyewitnesses of His Majesty; for He received from GOD the FATHER, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved SON, in Whom I am well pleased."

S. Mark ix.  
2.S. Luke ix.  
34.2 S. Pet. i.  
15-17.

There is reason to believe also, that the words of S. John, concerning the clouds in which the Son of Man shall come, have a spiritual signification. For the HOLY GHOST has used the same words in other parts of Scripture, to denote a great number of people. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of the conversion of the Gentiles, compares their flocking into the Church, to the flight, or quick motion of a cloud, denoting that they should come in great multitudes, and with great speed and eagerness. Moreover, that *clouds* are used in the Holy Scriptures as symbolical of collective bodies, is evident from the words of S. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews. For speaking of the faithful servants of the LORD, as having through faith, endured all manner of persecution, that they might obtain a better resurrection, he says, "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a *cloud of witnesses*, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race which is set before us, looking unto JESUS,

Isa. lx. 8.

Heb. xi. xii.

the author and finisher of our faith, Who for the joy which was set before Him endured the Cross, and despised the shame."

The words of the Apostle, therefore, considered in the light of these Scriptures, where *clouds* are used *metaphorically*, to signify a multitude of people, or collective bodies, teach us that the LORD will come with all His faithful ones, or collective bodies of believers, who have kept the faith, and served God in their day and generation. The word is plural—"He cometh," not with a cloud, but "with *clouds*." And there are different bands, or companies of the faithful. And each will stand in his own lot. There will be faithful Patriarchs; faithful Israelites; and faithful Christians; "The LORD thy God shall come, and all His saints with thee." They will not all come in resurrection bodies, as we have seen. "The spirits of just men made perfect will come with Him." "Those that sleep in JESUS will God bring with Him." "The dead in CHRIST" raised in immortal bodies, and fashioned like unto CHRIST's glorious body, together with those who are translated, shall also come with Him. These are the clouds of heaven, "in which the Son of Man cometh." And of these, the brightest cloud will be "the Church of the first-born." For those who have part in the first resurrection, will be assessors with CHRIST in judging the nations, when He comes in His kingdom, and will reign with Him in righteousness, and minister true judgment unto the people. Therefore when the harvest of the earth is reaped, He is represented as "*sitting on a white cloud*." This is S. John's description of the coming of the LORD. And whoever comes in any other way, claiming to be CHRIST, is a deceiver and an Antichrist. And as there

Rev. xiv.

will be many Antichrists who will come in His name, saying, I am CHRIST, and will deceive many, we shall do well to remember what is here revealed, and made known to us concerning His coming, so that we may use it against every impostor, however powerful he may be, or with whatever pretensions he may come. When "He cometh with clouds, every eye shall see Him." The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall behold it together. They that are CHRIST's "shall see Him as He is," the heathen shall see Him, but not nigh. Israel after the flesh shall see Him, and shall look upon Him Whom they have pierced, and mourn, every tribe apart and every family apart. And those Christians who have crucified Him afresh in the Spirit, and put Him to an open shame by dishonouring His Name and Word, shall mourn, and all the kindred of the earth, who have neglected His salvation, shall wail because of Him. And the things here declared shall have the sanction of the whole Church, for the Apostle, speaking in the name of all, says, "Even so, Amen."

Isa. xl. 5.

1 S. John iii.

Zech. xii. 10  
—13.

We believe that "the LORD coming with clouds," is also prophetic of the restoration of His Church under those spiritual ordinances which He gave for the perfecting of the saints at the beginning. Hence the Prophet Ezekiel, in his vision concerning the *Cherubim*, which are symbolic of these ordinances, and in his description of the deliverance of the Church from the spiritual captivity to which she has been subjected, uses this emblem; for in the vision which he saw, he beheld these cherubim of God coming out of a "*great cloud*," and as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. To the revival of the

Eph. iv.

Ezek. i.

Prov. xvi.  
15.

same spiritual blessings, Solomon appears to refer, when he says, "In the light of the king's countenance is life, and his favour is as *a cloud of the latter rain.*"

Isa. xviii. 4.

In like manner, the LORD speaks by Isaiah, "I will take My rest; and I will consider in My dwelling place, like a clear heat upon herbs, and like *a cloud of dew* in the heat of harvest."

"I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, which is and which was, and which is to come, the ALMIGHTY." This solemn declaration of the LORD appears to be introduced here, to show the absolute certainty of these things, and His sufficiency to accomplish all that is revealed in this book. Alpha and Omega, being the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet are expressive of Him as the Eternal Word; as the Wisdom of God, the container, and revealer of all truth, the sum and substance of all revelation. "The beginning and the ending," represent Him as the beginning of the creation of God, and the end, or container of all His purposes, by Whom, and for Whom, all things were created. The designation also which is here given of Himself, as He "Which is, and which was, and which is to come," is expressive of His Godhead; that He is very God—one with the FATHER, because this designation is applied to the FATHER, as we have seen in the fourth verse. This mode of expressing the truth concerning the FATHER, by transferring His appellations to the SON, is and must be the universal rule, for we can form no idea of God, or of any name of God, save as we see it in CHRIST. The Godhead, whether spoken of in relation to the FATHER, or the SON, or the HOLY GHOST, is essentially invisible, and incomprehensible. Every name, word, or title of God, must, therefore, be comprehended in CHRIST, and out

of, or apart from Him, they cannot reach the ear, much less the understanding of man.

“I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of JESUS CHRIST, was in the Isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of JESUS CHRIST.” The beloved disciple, in presenting to the Church this revelation of JESUS CHRIST, is evidently conscious of speaking with the authority of an Apostle, and desirous of adding the weight of his own name to the things he was about to narrate. We are here also reminded of the unity of CHRIST’S Church, and the brotherly love and sympathy which should exist between the members of His body; for John identifies himself as one with the saints; their brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of JESUS CHRIST. The saints are heirs and expectants of a kingdom which is not of this world, for which they have now to suffer as well as to wait in patience, until He shall appear Who is its true and legitimate King. It is His by redemption. He purchased it with His own blood. And as He suffered, so hath He patiently waited for His kingdom, greatly desiring it, for which He hath bidden us ever to pray, even with importunity, assuring us that God will avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him; though He bear long with them. It is therefore called emphatically, “The kingdom and patience of JESUS CHRIST.” Blessed are they who know the fellowship of His sufferings, who have the same mind and the same hope, patiently waiting with Him for the glory which shall be revealed in His Church at His coming: for they shall inherit His kingdom and reign with Him for ever.

The faithfulness of the Apostle in bearing witness to the truth, caused him to be banished to an Island called Patmos, by the Roman Emperor, Nero. He here tells us that he had been sent thither for the Word of God, and for the testimony of JESUS CHRIST. The word "*Patmos*" signifies mortal, or an oppressed condition, and very aptly represents the state in which the Church is placed, when she is bearing witness to the truth, and waiting for the coming and kingdom of the LORD. "The Word of God, and the testimony of JESUS CHRIST," as we have already learned from the third verse of this chapter, embraces the sum and substance of all revealed truth; all that proceeds from CHRIST as the Word of God, and all that the Spirit testifies concerning JESUS in the spirit of prophecy. The things to which S. John bore witness were not mere abstractions, but living realities. The twofold form of testimony here spoken of, is manifested in the Church, through the ordinance of Apostle and Prophet. Eph. ii. 20. God hath built His Church upon the "foundation of Apostles and prophets, JESUS CHRIST Himself being the chief corner stone." This is an eternal foundation, and without it this spiritual temple cannot be built, nor JESUS CHRIST be testified of as the Man of God's right hand; the risen and glorified Man. For this, therefore, we should witness, as John witnessed, even at the peril of life, "For if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" It is against this twofold form of witness, that Satan has ever striven, and ever will strive, knowing full well that if he does not succeed in suppressing such a witness, and overcoming it, it will in the end overcome him. Satan cannot endure the presence of the living Word, nor the testimony of JESUS CHRIST in the Church, because

Ps. xi. 3.



these are necessary to the revelation of the kingdom of heaven upon the earth. The Church, thus constituted, is the kingdom of heaven in a mystery. For these ordinances are the ordinances of the kingdom, and were given for the building together and perfecting of the saints, in order to its revelation and glory. These ordinances, therefore, were not given as some have assumed them to be, for a time only, or as mere scaffolding for the erecting of a building, which has to be removed when the building is completed. On the contrary, they *belong* to the building itself, and some of them to its very foundation. And as a building could not long remain if its foundations were removed, it follows, as a matter of necessity, that the foundation upon which the Church is built, of which JESUS CHRIST Himself is the chief corner stone, should, and must remain for ever, through eternal ages.

“I was in the Spirit on the LORD’s day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet.” The Apostle does not mean by being “*in the Spirit*,” that he was under an inspiration of the HOLY GHOST, causing him to apprehend the mind of CHRIST, as in writing an Epistle to the Church, but that he was under a supernatural influence, by which his bodily senses were suspended, and he was made to see things, and to hear sounds, which it is not in the power of the outward organs to apprehend. In this kind of vision, the outward senses do not appear to be necessary, as they neither assist nor hinder spiritual action, and a man both blind and deaf, might have the same visions given to him as one who is in possession of all his natural faculties. To have intercourse with the things of this world, bodily senses are necessary, but in spiritual communications, whether among the departed, as

in the case of Abraham and Dives, or from the invisible world to man, as in the visions given to S. John, and in the case also of all true vision, the exercise of the outward senses is suspended. The person neither sees nor hears by means of the bodily organs, but by the spirit within, which can see and hear things, when God willeth, which are not apprehended by the outward senses, which we need only in our intercourse with visible things. It was into this condition, called "*being in the Spirit*," that Ezekiel and Daniel were brought, when they saw the visions of God, and heard the revelations made unto them. And into this also S. Paul was wrapt when he had visions and revelations of the LORD. Speaking of which, he says, he was caught up into the third heavens, into paradise, and saw and heard things which could not be uttered, and in the seeing and hearing of which he did not know whether he was in the body or out of the body ; clearly intimating thereby, that his bodily senses had not been exercised during the vision, and that he was therefore unable to ascertain whether he had been in the body or absent from it.

"The LORD's day " is a title given to the Christian Sabbath, and distinguishes it from the Jewish, which was only a shadow of the rest into which we are brought, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST ; for we who live by faith in God's gracious acts towards us, are spiritually raised up with Him, and made to sit together in heavenly places. That day which was set apart by the Christian Church at the beginning, under the emphatic name of "THE LORD'S DAY," is the day in which He rose from the dead, and the day on which, according to His most gracious promise, He gave the HOLY GHOST, thereby proving Himself to be both

LORD and CHRIST. It was on "the first day of the week," also, that the primitive Christians came together for holy worship, and to commemorate His resurrection. The law having been fulfilled in CHRIST, its institutions were abolished, and for a Christian to keep the Jewish Sabbath would have been to dishonour the LORD, and virtually to deny His resurrection. It was, therefore, the Christian Sabbath, of which the Apostle speaks; and to which, he gives the blessed and dignified title of "the LORD's day," a title which should be peculiarly dear to us, as reminding us continually of Him whose great Name it celebrates; of the wondrous things He has wrought for us, and of that blessed immortality which His resurrection has opened up to us. On this day we should expect His especial presence, and should stir up our faith to receive especial blessings, and communications from Him, seeing He has chosen it as peculiarly His, and honoured it above all other days, in communicating these glorious revelations to His Church, by S. John; thereby giving us, as it were, an assurance, that though He is always present with His people, yet on that day they may expect to be more especially moved by the Spirit, and to receive greater manifestations of His grace and power.

But some have interpreted "the LORD's day," altogether in a figurative sense, supposing that the Apostle was wrapt in vision, to see what would take place in the future day of the LORD, when He shall come to reign on the earth. Now, if all these visions had reference to that future day of glory, there would be no objection to this interpretation, because such would be the fact, whether the Apostle meant to express it in these words or not. But as the greater part of these

visions do *not* appertain to that future day or dispensation, it would give the words an unnatural sense so to interpret them ; particularly as they express simply that portion of time which we call the Christian Sabbath, or first day of the week ; and which, without doubt, was set apart for Christian worship from the earliest days of the Apostles ; and is a figure of the rest into which the Spirit now enables us to enter by faith, as well as a type of the future rest that remaineth to the people of God.

“The great voice as of a trumpet,” which the Apostle heard behind him, was the voice of God ; elsewhere spoken of in the Scriptures, as “great and powerful.” This mode of expression is significant of the majesty and authority of the person speaking, as well as of the immediate importance of the things revealed.

The voice came from “*behind*,” to intimate, that it was not a new revelation the LORD was about to make to His servant, but a reiteration and application of those things that had been previously revealed, or rather shadowed forth by the holy prophets, under the types and symbols of the Old Testament. It is an important principle ever to be kept in mind, that we have, properly speaking, no new revelation. All the mysteries of the Christian faith are contained in the Old Testament Scriptures, either in type or emblem, but they were not understood by those of the former dispensation, as they are by us to whom they are now made known, and who have received the reality of the things typified. S. Paul tells us that “the law was a shadow of heavenly things.” And that “Moses, as a servant, was faithful in all his house, for a *testimony of those things* which were to be *spoken after*.” On this

1 S. Pet. i. 10  
—12

Heb. ix. 23,  
24 ; x. 1.

Heb. iii. 5, 6.

account it is, that we find our LORD and His Apostles continually referring to those ancient records, as the only source from which they derived, by the light of the HOLY GHOST, all their knowledge of the mind and purpose of God. And it may be safely affirmed that there is nothing taught in the New Testament, but what is to be found in the Old, when rightly interpreted. Whosoever, therefore, assumes to have received any new revelation, (as the Mormonites, for example,) stamp themselves as impostors, or as deceived by Satan.

The "*Trumpet*," as we have already seen, is an Ecclesiastical symbol: having been appointed by God under the Mosaic dispensation, and used at all the solemn sacrifices and festivals. Its notes were first heard from Mount Sinai, when the LORD gave unto Israel the lively oracles, to preserve them a separate people, and a nation of Priests unto the LORD their God, that in them, all the nations of the earth might be blessed. And His voice assuming this sound, would indicate to the mind of the Apostle, that the things He was about to reveal would relate to the condition or history of His Church, or to circumstances through which the Church had to pass in the world, before it could attain its eternal and heavenly inheritance.

In this trumpet-voice, the LORD JESUS again designates Himself "The Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last," to intimate that what He reveals contains all that word can express of the mind and will of God, and that He is the doer of all that word can reveal. The first to begin, and the last to complete all the purposes of His FATHER. As He descended the lowest Phil. ii. 6—11. to fulfil the will of His FATHER, and was obedient unto

death, even the death of the Cross, so now is He first and highest in honour and power, and hath received a name, which is above every name, whether in heaven or in earth."

"And what thou seest write in a book and send it unto the seven Churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea." "*What thou seest*," embraces the whole prophecy; all that should be revealed to the Apostle; not only in the Epistles, but in all the visions given to him. And the injunction to send it to the seven Churches, shows that it concerns the whole Church of CHRIST; that it had not only an immediate, and particular application to these Churches in Asia, but also an universal application to the whole Church, in every period of her history.

"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me." The act of the Apostle in turning to see the voice, represents a retrospective action of the mind of the Apostle, in calling to remembrance the past acts and words of the LORD, as contained in the Holy Scriptures. For in turning, he saw the LORD surrounded by symbolic imagery, drawn from this source, and familiar to every one acquainted with these writings. And if we would understand these visions, we must, in like manner, turn in spirit to meditate upon, and acquaint ourselves with these ancient records of the words and acts of the LORD. For in these alone we shall find the true key to the interpretation of the visions of this book, and so prove the truth of the saying, that spiritual things must be compared with spiritual, and Scripture be interpreted by Scripture, and not by any learning or ingenuity in those who lay

aside, or reject this Apostolic rule of interpretation.

“ And being turned I saw seven golden candlesticks.”

These, we are told in the vision itself, are the symbols of the seven Churches. We learn in the book of Exodus, that the candlestick made of beaten gold, with its seven branches, and seven lamps, stood in the holy place of the tabernacle, and S. Paul tells us that the ordinances of the law were a shadow of heavenly things. The word used is not *λύχνος*, light, but *λυχνία*, a stand for light; showing us that the Church is not the light, but the light bearer, giving forth that light which she received from CHRIST, Who is the light. JESUS is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. And the Church is called to manifest that light, that all men might be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.

“ And in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.” The name of “the Son of Man” is given to the LORD in the prophecies of the Old Testament Scripture, and is especially used to represent Him as one with us in our nature—“God manifest in the flesh.” And it is introduced in this vision to teach us that He is not in the midst of the Churches merely in His Divine nature as the SON of GOD, but that He walks in the midst of them as a Man—that He speaks to men through men set in ordinances: for His ordinances are men, and not abstractions. And to walk in obedience to His word, spoken by them, is to confess that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh; and whosoever maketh not this confession is Antichrist, and has neither the FATHER nor the SON. CHRIST mani-

Ex. xxv.  
xxvi. 35.

Heb. viii. 5.

1 S. John ii.  
22.

S. John xiii.  
20; S. Matt.  
xvi. 16-18.

fest in the flesh, is the Rock on which His Church must be built: whether it be seen in Himself or in those whom He ordains to speak in His Name by the HOLY GHOST sent down from heaven. In this vision we are also assured that the LORD JESUS is present in His Church always, even unto the end of the age, and is faithful to the promise He made to His disciples at His Ascension.

S. Matt.  
xxviii. 28.

He was "clothed down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle." We are not told the colour, and materials of His garments, but are left to infer them from the character of the Chief Shepherd in which He appears in the vision, and from the girdle He wore, which was that of the High Priest: for none but the High Priest might wear a golden girdle. We are confirmed in this, by reference to the fifteenth chapter, where the Seven Angels, having the seven last plagues, are described as being clothed with pure and white linen, and having on their breasts golden girdles. And as each Angel of the Church, in his Office and Ministry, is the representative of the LORD in His character of chief Shepherd and Bishop, we conclude that our LORD in this vision, must have been clothed with the white garment in which S. John saw Him before on the Mount of transfiguration, and which we are told, was exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth could white them. These are also Old Testament emblems and they represent the office of CHRIST in the Church as its chief Bishop and Pastor. The "Golden Girdle" symbolizes the sustaining power of the truth, to those who use it, even as He Himself was sustained by it when on earth, in fulfilling the will of His FATHER. S. Paul adopts the emblem of the girdle as a means of strength, saying,

Vide Ex.  
xxviii. 8.



“Having your loins girt about with truth;” and S. Peter, exhorting to stedfastness says, “Gird up the loins of your mind.” “The golden girdle,” which the LORD is described as wearing, is not the emblem of a mere abstract principle of knowledge, but of a living reality; and shows that each member of His Body will be strengthened in the fulfilment of his duties and be kept blameless and unrebukable according as he walks in the truth of the commandments and ordinances of the LORD.

“His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes as a flame of fire.” The prophet Daniel describes Him under similar emblems—  
 “Whose garments were white as snow and the hairs of Dan. vii. 9. His head like pure wool.” The “*head*” is the symbol of rule; and “the *hairs* of His head,” we believe to represent the ministry of those who are set to rule in the Church. Their *whiteness* represents the principle of righteousness which should be exhibited in this ruling ministry; and the comparison to wool and snow, would indicate that this ministry should on the one hand afford protection and defence to the flock of CHRIST, as wool, which is the natural defence of the sheep from external injury, and on the other hand, should, as the snow in winter, be cold and repelling to its enemies.

“His eyes as a flame of fire,” represent the presence of the HOLY GHOST in His ordinances for light and discernment. “The light of the body is the eye.” S. Matt. vi. 22.  
 “The eyes of the LORD are in every place beholding Prov. xv. 3. the evil and the good.” “His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men.” Psa. xl. 4. As this vision of the LORD represents His action in the universal Church, symbolized by the seven golden candlesticks, so His eyes of

fire are significant of the light and discernment of Apostles and Prophets whom He set in His Church at the beginning. "*Fire*" is the symbol of God in His character of *love*. "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." As the fire which fell from heaven consumed the sacrifices upon the altar, so the love of God was revealed in the sacrifice, and death of CHRIST. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten SON." "Herein is manifested the love of God towards us, in that while we were yet sinners CHRIST died for us." His eyes as a flame of fire, therefore, express the love with which He ever beholds His people, even when He is constrained to chasten them.

"And His feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters." It is written by the prophet Isaiah, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" The feet of our LORD in this vision, are emblematical of the Evangelical and Pastoral ministries in His body the Church; and represent a class of ministers in whom these functions are united. "The *fine brass*" represents the power of the HOLY GHOST in which they should minister, and by which they should cast out devils, heal the sick, and tread upon all the power of the enemy. They are said to *burn as in a furnace*, because of the affliction to which these Ministers of God are especially exposed in fulfilling their office; and which indeed they were taught to expect.

"His voice as the sound of many waters," represents the LORD as speaking in the members of His mystical

Cant. viii. 7.

2 Chron. vii.  
1—3.S. John iii.  
16.1 S. John iv.  
10.

Heb. xii. 5, 6.

Isa. lii. 7.

S. Mark xvi.  
17, 18.Vide S. John  
xv. 18—20.

body, He being present in every member, and in each according to his place and measure, so that His Church when rightly organized, unitedly gives forth the fulness of His Mind, even as it is called by S. Paul, "the fulness of Him which filleth all in all." The expression "Many Waters" is frequently used to denote many people, and in two places in this book the same words are used to represent the voice of the Church.

Rev. xiv. 2.  
and xix. 1—  
7.

"And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." The right hand is an emblem of power. "Thou savest by Thy right hand them that trust in Thee." "Thy right hand shall hold me up and Thy loving correction shall make me great." "He saveth His anointed with the saving strength of His right hand." And thus the LORD pleadeth for His Church. "Save with Thy right hand and hear Me." And again, "Let Thine hand be upon the man of Thy right hand whom Thou madest so strong for Thine own self." So in the hundred and eighteenth Psalm,—*"The right hand of the LORD is exalted; the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly."* In the vision before us, "The right hand of the LORD" is the symbol of Apostleship. "The stars," are the angels of the Churches. And the holding of the stars in the right hand, represents the unity of the Churches as preserved by means of the Apostolic ministry.

Ps. xvii. 7.

Ps. xviii. 35.

Ps. xx. 6.

Ps. lx. and  
cviii.

There are many points of analogy between the stars in the firmament of heaven and the office of chief Minister in the Churches which they represent, and from this analogy much instruction may be derived. The stars are fixed, each one in its own locality, and are independent of each other's influence. They shine

by their own light, and not from any reflected or borrowed source, and appear dependent only on Him whose hand has fixed them in their respective spheres, and "who calleth them all by their names." And in all probability, each is the centre of a planetary system, similar to our own. After this analogy, the angels of churches, were, in their original constitution, placed in a given locality, and made responsible to none but CHRIST, in His Apostles: who were His hand that set them in their places, and sustained them there. These stars, also, in the spiritual firmament of heaven, gave forth their light from God to other ministers who stood around them, and of whom they were the centre. The stars in the firmament may be said to be representations of that sun from which we derive the light of day: and as the sun in the natural heavens is an emblem of the LORD, the Sun of Righteousness, so the stars are emblems of those who represent the LORD in His character of Angel of the Universal Church. That such was the case we infer from the apostolic Epistles and tradition. For we are told that when S. Paul visited the Church at Ephesus he gathered the Elders of the Church together; and tradition informs us that Timothy was the angel of the Church to whom S. John wrote.

"*The mouth*," is the symbol of language or speech. Thus when Moses complained of being "slow of speech, the LORD said unto him,—"*Who made man's*   
*Ex. iv. 11.* *mouth?*" And David said, "I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." The "*two-edged sword*," proceeding out of the mouth of CHRIST, represents the Word of God, as it was spoken at the first in its twofold form of ministerial teaching and pro-

*Ps. lxxviii. 2.*

phetic utterance : which twofold form is an essential characteristic of "the Sword of the Spirit:" so that when the word of God has not these two edges upon it, it is not according to the mind of the LORD, or as He would have it spoken. For He is described, as having a sword not with *one* edge, but with *two* edges upon it. S. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews describes the Word of God, as "quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. iv. 12.

"His countenance," or appearance (*ὁψις*) being compared to "the sun when it shineth in its strength," represents CHRIST in the midst of His Churches as their true light. For as the sun is the source of all light in the natural world, so CHRIST is the fountain of all light in the spiritual. And this light is the bright effulgence of that glorious resurrection life into which he has entered, and in the light of which we should walk : for CHRIST hath raised us from the dead, and it is as speaking to us from Heaven, that He is here seen by the Apostle. He is the fulness, and perfection of light to the universal Church, as seen in these seven ; and it had been well, if His people had continued to walk in this light of the Sun of Righteousness, who ever shineth in His strength in the spiritual firmament, and in whose light the spiritual have ever walked from the beginning. Let us have grace to walk in this light of His resurrection life, and be filled with its hope ; that when CHRIST Who is our life shall appear, we may be like unto Him, and with Him shine as the sun, in the kingdom of our FATHER.

The appearance of the LORD as seen by the Prophet Daniel is very similar in many respects to this appearance of Him as given to His servant John. In Daniel

Dan. x. 5, 6. He is seen "clothed in fine linen, and girded about the loins with the fine gold of Uphas, His countenance was as the lightning, and His eyes as lamps of fire, and His feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of His word as the voice of

Ez. xliii. 2. a multitude." Again, in Ezekiel it is said, "The glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east, and His voice was as the sound of many waters, and the earth shined with His glory." S. Matthew

S. Matt. xvi. 2. also, speaking of His transfiguration, says, "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." And when He appeared to Paul on his way to

Acts xxvi. 13. Damascus, His glory was more dazzling than the eastern splendour of the mid-day sun.

We may infer from this vision of the LORD as seen by S. John, that He is surrounded with a visible radiance which may be regarded as the outward sign of that glory wherein He dwells, which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, or can see.

1 Tim. vi. 16.

"And when I saw Him I fell at His feet as dead." This vision of the glory of the LORD so overwhelmed the beloved disciple, as not only to deprive him of strength, but apparently also of life. In the vision of Daniel before referred to we find that the glory which

Dan. x. 7. he saw had a similar effect upon him. He says "There remained no strength in me, for my comeliness was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength." It was more than flesh in its present mortal condition could sustain. From whence we learn that in order to "see Him as He is," we must be made like unto Him in body as well as in soul and spirit. Of the necessity

of such a change, S. John speaks in his first Epistle, saying—"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and <sup>1 S. John iii. 1-3.</sup> it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when CHRIST shall appear *we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is*, and every one that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure." The Apostle falling at the feet of the LORD as dead, may be also regarded as teaching us the effect which this revelation of the LORD should produce in the heart and mind of every one who believes in it. They should be as dead. Dead to the natural, and alive only to the spiritual. If we are dead with CHRIST, we shall also live with Him. If we are now dead to the natural, and our life hid with CHRIST in God, then when CHRIST Who is our life shall appear, we shall also appear with Him in glory. And this is the condition in which all who have been baptized into CHRIST should be found. And as it is the work of the Evangelists to declare this Gospel of the kingdom, so it is at the "*feet*,"—the symbol of this ministry of the LORD—that this surrender of the natural life should be made.

"And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not ; I am the first and the last : I am He that liveth and was dead ; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen ; and have the keys of hell, and of death." In this act, we have a manifestation of the tender regard which the LORD JESUS ever bears towards His people ; declaring that they have nothing to fear who believe in Him : for He will sustain and defend them. He will save with His own right hand them that put their trust in Him. Moreover, this act is significant of the anointing and sealing of the HOLY GHOST, which He communicated at the first through

the Apostles. This anointing or sealing of the HOLY GHOST is intended to perfect us in love : and by it the FATHER'S Name is written on our foreheads. The words which follow the laying on of His hands, are doubtless intended to minister consolation to all, who like John, know the fellowship of His sufferings, and are made conformable unto His death ; assuring them, that as they are partakers of His sufferings, so they shall also be partakers of His glory. He, the living One, Whose ways were of old from everlasting, and by Whom all things subsist, took our nature upon Him, and died, and now liveth again, for ever and ever : Amen. And He hath now the keys of hades, and of death ; that is, He can shut men up in death, and open their prison house again, and restore the soul to the body. He committed to His Church, this power of binding and loosing, as well as that other power of binding and loosing exercised in the forgiveness of sins, and He intended that the one should be the sign of the other : for S. Peter exercised this power upon Ananias and Sapphira ; when they lied to the HOLY GHOST, and the prayer of the same Apostle also opened the gates of hades, and Dorcas lived again to the joy and comfort of the poor saints whom she had benefited so much.

“The keys of death and hades,” are not synonymous terms, but express distinct things. Death refers to the condition of the *body* when the soul is separated from it. The body, (which is the only corruptible part of man) then sleeps the sleep of death, until the morning of the resurrection ; although it may be reanimated again, for a season, as in the case of Dorcas, and others. But the soul when separated from the body does not sleep. It passes into hades, or the place of separate spirits, as is recorded of the soul of our



LORD ; to whom it was promised that His soul should not be left in hades, nor His flesh see corruption. These two conditions, or separate states, are expressed in the words, Death and Hades. The grave is the receptacle of the one, hades of the other. The time cometh when death and hades shall be cast into the lake of fire ; i.e., they shall be destroyed at the general resurrection or final judgment. JESUS went down into Rev. xx. the lowest parts of the earth, and preached to the spirits in prison during the period that His body abode in the sepulchre. And we infer from what S. Paul says of a " Baptism for the dead," viewed in connexion with the words of S. Peter, " that for this cause the 1 S. Pet. iv. 6. Gospel is preached to them that are dead, that they may be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit," that there are those among the departed, who after the example of our LORD, may still exercise such a ministry in order to prepare others for the day of resurrection and judgment.

To maintain, as some do, that the soul sleeps, and that it has no exercise of its functions without the bodily organs, is to revive again, in a more subtle form, the old heresy of the Sadducees, who believed in neither angel nor spirit, nor even in the resurrection of the body. For the arguments which are used to maintain the one, will also serve to maintain the other, and the plainest passages of Scripture are construed in such a figurative sense, as to render it uncertain whether there be any resurrection of the body at all. This opinion, however, is not only contrary to the plain declarations of Scripture, but also contrary to the general belief of all nations, heathens, as well as Christians, excepting only some few of whom it may

be charitably assumed, that they rather hope than believe their doctrine to be true.

“Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.” We are here again shown the importance of these visions, by the command given to the Apostle to write them, for the use of the Churches. *The things which he had seen*, were not merely the symbolic imagery which was then present before him in vision, but also the spiritual realities which were represented by it. *The things which are*, refer to the condition of the Church at the time the revelation was given as disclosed in the seven Epistles, which were also typical of her condition in the seven periods of her history, from which we learn, that the Church, even then, was in its downward course to apostacy. One Apostle only survived, and that Apostle in exile. And these seven Epistles were the last the Church ever received by the hand of an Apostle.

“*The things which shall be*,” were the visions which follow, and which contain a symbolic prophecy of the principal events to take place from that time until the new heavens and new earth shall appear, and the new Jerusalem be seen upon the earth. The command, therefore, to write these things which the Apostle had already seen, the things which were then present, and the things which were still future, would appear to confirm beyond doubt, that which we have already stated, viz., that this Revelation of JESUS CHRIST contains the history of the Church of CHRIST, from the beginning of this dispensation to the consummation of all things.

“The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks.”

These are interpreted by our LORD Himself, in the following words: "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches." Here we have the symbol of perfection, and of universality applied both to the Church and its ministry; showing what is God's mind and purpose in CHRIST JESUS concerning us. As S. Paul says, "Ye are complete in Him." In Him all fulness dwells; fulness of gifts, fulness of ministry, fulness of wisdom and power, and every other gift necessary to perfection. With this fulness, the LORD endowed His Church at the beginning, as S. John testified, saying, "Out of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." All these gifts, and ministries, should therefore be manifested in "His body, which is the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." And so far as it has failed of *this*, so far it has failed to be the light of the world, and a blessing to men. We will now proceed to examine

Coloss. ii. 10.

S. John i. 16.

Ephes. i. 23.

#### THE PREFATORY VISIONS TO THE SEALS.

1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.

2 And immediately I was in the Spirit: and behold, a throne *was* set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne.

3 And He that sat *was* to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

4 And round about the throne *were* four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6 And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast *was* like a flying eagle.

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, which was, and is, and is to come.

9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, Who liveth for ever and ever,

10 The four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.

Rev. v.

1 And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

7 And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne.

8 And when He had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and

hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ;

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests : and we shall reign on the earth.

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders : and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands ;

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever.

The vision preceding the Epistles is, as we have seen, of a spiritual character, representing our LORD as present in His Church, in the exercise of spiritual authority and discernment. And while this introductory vision to the seals contains nothing contrary to this spiritual character, it gives us another phase or aspect of our LORD, as Head over all, in that universal dominion, which He shall exercise by His Church on the earth, when those who overcome, as He overcame, shall sit with Him on His throne, ruling in righteousness, and ministering true judgment unto the people. To this dominion, there is some allusion in the preface to the Epistles ; connecting the Spiritual with the Regal, and the Priestly with the Kingly, character of the Church. “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us *kings* and *priests* unto God and His FATHER, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.” In like

manner, the vision before us does not separate from the LORD His spiritual attributes, but adds thereunto the Regal. Thus we read in the Prophet Zechariah—

Zech. vi. 12, 13. “The Man, whose name is the Branch; He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the LORD; even He shall build the temple of the LORD; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be Priest upon His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.” S. Paul also in his Epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of the Priesthood of CHRIST, says,

Heb. vi. 20. it was “After the order of Melchisedec,” who was king as well as priest. That priesthood, which at present is only seen in a mystery, will hereafter be openly manifested, when the LORD JESUS shall sit upon His throne. We see not yet all things put under Him, but we see JESUS, Who for the suffering of death is exalted to the right hand of God. He, as our High Priest is entered into heaven itself with His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us. But the time draweth near when He shall be revealed as King and Priest; as it is written of Him, “I have set my

Ps. ii. 6. King upon my holy hill of Zion.” And again, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom.” He who fills the throne of God is the Holy, Righteous, and Just One. He alone is fitted to exercise irresponsible and unlimited power. And if we would sit with Him upon *His* throne, we must also be holy, righteous, and just after the same blessed example.

“After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven.” “After this,” says the Apostle, that is, after he had beheld the vision of the LORD, as the Bishop of His Church, “After this, I looked, and

behold a door was opened in heaven." The opening of a door in heaven, is the presenting to the spirit of man a vision of spiritual things, by which he is enabled to apprehend mysteries of God and of CHRIST, which his intellectual faculties cannot attain without a direct revelation. We may illustrate this by reference to the doors of the most holy place in the temple, which concealed from view the shadows of the heavenly things within. The same thing was represented by the veil of the tabernacle, which separated the holy from the most holy place, within which the High Priest alone might enter once a year, and that not without blood, which he offered for himself, and the errors of the people, the HOLY GHOST this signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, whilst as the first tabernacle was yet standing, which was a *figure* for the time then present, and not the heavenly thing itself. But CHRIST being made an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, is entered into heaven itself for us, and it is through Him, that visions and revelations of God were given unto His servants. The door which John beheld in vision, began to be opened on the day of Pentecost, and has especial reference to the work of the HOLY GHOST, in the organization of the Church, to the setting of each member in the body, and to the gifts of ministry, which the LORD gave after His ascension for the perfecting of the saints. The true constitution of the Church is thus fully revealed in the visions here presented to the Apostle, and this great purpose of God concerning the Regal Priesthood of CHRIST, will be fulfilled when the LORD shall come with all His saints, and those who shall be made unto our God kings and

priests, shall sit with CHRIST on His throne, even as He has sat down on the throne of His FATHER.

“The first voice which I heard, was as it were of a trumpet talking with me, which said, “Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.” The *trumpet*, as we have already seen, is an ecclesiastical emblem, and expresses the actings of the LORD in His Church ; and it shows that the vision is a revelation from Him, as the Melchisedec Priest, disclosing the events which will precede the manifestation of His kingdom upon earth. For until He come, the kingdom of heaven is only seen in a mystery. The voice said unto him, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. “The things which shall be hereafter,” relate to the perfect and entire fulfilment of the things revealed in this vision, and are distinct from the seals which refer to the successive acts of God which precede them.

“And immediately I was in the Spirit.” The being *in the Spirit*, as here expressed by the Apostle, is a condition in which the organs of sense are suspended from their action in the visible world, while the soul and spirit are used only in reference to the spiritual and invisible. S. Paul says he was caught up into the third heavens, and knew not whether he was in the body or out of the body. And many other visions of the Scriptures might be referred to as illustrating this condition.

“And, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *One* sat on the throne.” The *ONE* here seen is the LORD. When He ascended on high, He sat down on the throne of His FATHER. But it is evident that this throne, on which John beheld Him sitting, is not the throne of the FATHER, but His own throne, as LORD



of all. And He sits upon it, in the character of the incarnate SON of GOD.

“And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone. Precious stones are used in the Scriptures to designate spiritual persons and spiritual things. S. Peter speaks of CHRIST Himself as a “living stone, chosen of GOD, and precious,” and believers as lively stones. S. Paul also speaks of the saints as “precious stones.” The new Jerusalem, which descendeth from GOD out of heaven, is compared to “a stone most precious.” The jasper, and the sardine or ruby, were the first and last stones in the breastplate of the High Priest. The *jasper* is described in this book as a stone “clear as crystal.” The *sardine*, or ruby, is of a florid flesh colour. The combination of the two very aptly represents our LORD JESUS CHRIST, in glorified humanity, and as embodying all spiritual perfections.

1 S. Pet. ii. 4.  
5.

Ex. xxviii.  
15—20.

Rev. xxi. 11.

“And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.” We read in the fourth chapter of Genesis, that when GOD established His covenant with Noah concerning the earth, He set His bow in the cloud, as a token of that covenant, in which He pledged Himself, that the earth should no more be destroyed by a flood ; but that while the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, should not cease. The rainbow in the vision, therefore, represents Him Who sits upon the throne, as appropriating to Himself this symbol of GOD’s covenant, and as claiming its fulfilment ; for having redeemed the earth, it is His by inheritance, and of necessity the covenant made with Noah, and all flesh, reverts to Him as Head and LORD of all. The rainbow in appearance

was like unto an emerald, which is *green*, representing, that when He shall sit upon His throne in reality, and not in vision, "the earth shall yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us." Of Him it is also written in the seventy-second Psalm—"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth."

Ps. lxxii. 6.

"And round about the throne, were four and twenty thrones; and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold." By these thrones we are distinctly assured that the vision appertains to the Lordship of CHRIST, for He has no peers upon the throne of His FATHER. None can sit upon that throne, save He, Who is God, co-equal, and co-eternal with the FATHER. But on the throne of the Son of Man we may sit. This honour is clearly promised to the faithful—"He that overcometh shall sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My FATHER in His throne." Hence the four and twenty Elders are seen sitting around Him upon thrones, and wearing crowns of gold, though they derive all their authority and power from Him. For He is King of kings, and LORD of lords. The four and twenty thrones on which the Elders sit, no doubt have reference to the promise which our LORD made to His Apostles—"Ye that have followed ME, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." This was spoken of the apostleship to the circumcision. But S. Paul speaks of himself as an Apostle to the Gentiles, and as one born out of due time, or before the time. Analogy should lead us, therefore, to believe that the number

Rev. iii. 21.

S. Matt. xix.  
28.

of this latter apostleship will be completed; and that the two bands are here represented as filling the four and twenty thrones around the throne of the Son of Man. This is not a mere hypothesis, but what the Scriptures in other places lead us to believe, is absolutely essential for the perfecting of the Church, and for presenting it as a chaste virgin unto CHRIST, at His appearing and kingdom. We conclude, therefore, that in the completion of the purpose of God in CHRIST JESUS, two twelves will be seen adjudicating with, and for Him, and thus filling the four and twenty seats round about the throne. These two twelves, the one at the beginning, and the other at the end of the Dispensation, complete the purpose of God in CHRIST, and are *exponential* of the Church's character, and glory, as called to sit with CHRIST upon His throne, and to reign over all things with Him. It may be inferred also, that these four and twenty Elders represent the *office* of the Apostles, or Rulers, in the Church of CHRIST, rather than as limiting their number; even as the four living creatures are emblematic of office, and ministry, rather than of the number of persons thus used of God in these ministries.

“And they were clothed in white raiment, and they had on their heads crowns of gold.” These are priestly and regal emblems, and show that they are priests as well as kings, i.e., kings and priests unto God and His FATHER.

“Out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and voices, and thunderings.” These represent the manifestations of the HOLY GHOST, by whose agency the LORD JESUS and His saints shall reign over all things in the age to come. “*Lightnings*,” symbolize the revelation of the Spirit, as giving forth the light of God's truth; as it

is written, "In Thy light we shall see light." "*Voices*," are the gifts of Prophecy in the members of His mystical body. And "*thunderings*" represent the giving forth of the judgments of the LORD, by Apostles and Prophets, or as proceeding from the same source from whence the lightnings or revelations come.

"And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the Seven Spirits of God." The *lamp* of fire is an emblem of the mind, illuminated by the HOLY GHOST; and *seven* represent the perfect illumination of the Spirit of CHRIST, filling all the rational and intellectual creation, as it is written—  
 Isa. xi. 9; Heb. ii. 14. "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD."

"And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal." The *sea* is used to represent peoples and multitudes, and the city of the saints which cometh down from God out of heaven, is compared to glass, clear as crystal. This emblem, therefore, represents the Church as having entered into rest. All these representations show clearly that this vision has reference to the manifestation of CHRIST, when He shall be King and LORD upon the earth. For it is only as the Church approximates towards perfection that this vision can be realized.

"And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures—τέσσαρα ζῶα—full of eyes before and behind. And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature had a face as a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle." Ζῶα, should be translated "living creatures," having a very different meaning to θηρίον, which in other parts of the Apocalypse is rightly translated "beasts."

Isa. xi. 9;  
Heb. ii. 14.

Rev. xvii.  
18.

Rev. xxi.

The former represent the ministers of CHRIST, the latter the forms of evil. In order to show what these living creatures represent, we must consider what they are used to symbolize in other parts of Scripture. The *lion* is the most courageous and powerful of all the beasts of the earth. Of Judah, it is said, "He crouched as a lion, and as an old lion, who shall rouse him up?" Gen. xlix. 9. "What is stronger than a lion?" "The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion." Judges xiv. 18. Our LORD is called "The lion of the tribe of Judah." Prov. xix. 12. Satan also is said to go "about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Rev. v. 5. The lion, therefore, is used to designate *power*, and to represent rule and authority among men, and applies to the Apostolic or ruling ministers in the Church. The second living creature was like a *calf*; *μόσχον* is an inflection of *μόσχος*, a bull, and is equivalent to the Latin *bos*, the generic appellation of the ox tribe, in which sense it frequently occurs in the Septuagint. It is written in the law of Moses, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." Deut. xxv. 4. "Doth God take care for oxen, or saith He it altogether for our sakes?" 1 Cor. ix. 9. Doubtless for our sakes it was written, that they who *serve at the altar* should live by the altar." This emblem, therefore, symbolizes the Pastoral office, and the ox, from its patient, persevering, and ruminating character, very aptly represents that patience, labour, and meditation which characterize the faithful and devoted ministers of CHRIST, who have charge over His flock. "The third living creature had a face as a man." This designates the character of a preacher of the Gospel, or the Evangelist's ministry, which is addressed to the natural understanding, and ought to be such as the rational and reasoning faculty of man can comprehend. Such

an one should speak to man as his fellow man ; as one who is endowed with understanding, and capable of receiving the truth into the understanding, like as when the man CHRIST JESUS went forth with His heart and countenance filled with love, to proclaim the glad tidings of His Gospel to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. "The fourth living creature was like a flying eagle." The eagle far exceeds every other bird in its flight, and soars with an unwearied wing towards heaven, beyond the reach of the natural eye. It makes its nest on the highest rocks, and teaches its young ones to fly by taking them upon its back when weary or in danger of falling, and so contrives to carry them, that an arrow could not hurt them, without piercing through the parent's body. In allusion to this, God said unto the house of Israel—"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, *and how I bare you on eagles' wings*, and brought you unto Myself." And again, God speaking of Jacob as the lot of His inheritance, says—"As the eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings ; so the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him." The eye of the eagle is said to be able to gaze on the sun shining in its brightness, and to behold its prey from an immense distance. From all these characteristics of the eagle, we see how very aptly this emblem represents the prophetic ministry in the Church.

Exod. xix. 4.

Deut. xxxii.  
11, 12.

We read in the New Testament that JESUS exercised these ministries in His own person when on earth. He was the Apostle or sent One of the LORD ; the Pastor and Teacher of His people ; the Evangelist, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom ; and the Prophet like unto

Moses, revealing the deep things of God. These offices were exercised by HIM as the container of all ministry. And when He ascended up on high, He gave this fourfold ministry to the Church, to be exercised by *distinct* persons. He gave *some men* Apostles, Eph. iv. 11. *some men* Prophets, *some men* Evangelists, and *some men* Pastors and teachers. Of this we are informed by S. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians, and we read of them in operation in the Acts of the Apostles. Acts iv. And these four ministries were given by our LORD, not for a time only, but for the building up of His Church, *until* we *all* come unto the *unity* of the Faith, Eph. iv. 13. unto a *perfect* man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST. And these four living creatures being *in* the throne and *round about* the throne, show that these ministries enter into, and form a part of, the very constitution of CHRIST'S Church—that they are not only those four forms of ministry by which the LORD prepares His Church for the kingdom, but that they are also the eternal forms of His ministration in His kingdom.

“And the four living creatures had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, which was, and is, and is to come.” The “wing,” is a symbol of help, or sustentation. The wings sustain the body to which they are attached, and are used to convey it from place to place. From which we gather that the principal ministers symbolized in this vision have helps subordinate to them in their ministry, by which they are enabled, as it were, to multiply their presence. “They Is. vi. 2. had each of them *six* wings,” the same number which were attached to the Seraphim described by Isaiah,

showing out the perfections of the spiritual ministry which each of these living creatures is intended to represent : for the principal minister with his six subordinate helps in ministry make up a sevenfold unity.

Their being "*full of eyes within*," represents that internal spiritual perception with which each of these ministers is endowed. "They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, which was and is and is to come," which shows that they are living examples of that holiness which it is their duty, both ministerially and personally to set before the saints, and in which they must be perfected in order to be made meet for His kingdom. By reference to chapter i. 8, it is evident that the Divine Person here pronounced thrice Holy, is the LORD JESUS CHRIST ; for there He takes to Himself the titles here given Him, as "He that is, and was, and is to come, the ALMIGHTY." He is pronounced *thrice* Holy, because in Him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in Him the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST are manifested. And the expression—"Who was, and is, and is to come, may relate to His eternal existence, and successive manifestations,—first, when He was revealed as "The Word:" secondly, as God manifest in the flesh ; and thirdly, when He shall come again in glory and great majesty.

S. John i. 1.

S. John i. 14.

S. Matt.  
xxiv. 30.

"And when those living creatures give glory, and honour, and thanks, to Him that sat on the throne, Who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory, and honour, and power : for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they



are and were created." Here, the four living creatures are represented as the leaders of the worship of CHRIST'S Church. And it is not in His character of Priest, that worship is offered to Him in this place, but in that of King and LORD of all. In this worship, the four living creatures take the precedence, sounding forth, as it were, the note of glory, and honour, and thanks, before any others could take it up, or continue it. In this act of worship, they acknowledge, that the saints, who reign with Him, derive all they possess from Him: for they cast their crowns before the throne, and declare that it is to Him all glory, and honour, and power are due. And the ascription of this worship is not given Him on the ground of His humanity alone, but because He is GOD as well as Man, the CREATOR, Who made all things for His own pleasure, and through whose work in redemption, the eternal purpose of GOD will be seen.

The Apostle, continuing to describe the vision, says,—

"And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals." The word *βιβλίον*, here rendered book, literally means a *roll*, which was the form or method in which the writings of the ancients were preserved, being written on skins or sheets of parchments, and then rolled up together, forming one roll; and by affixing a seal to each sheet the contents would be rendered inaccessible. Of such kind was the book described in this vision. And supposing the roll to contain seven sheets, each sheet having a seal affixed to it, the whole roll could only be read, by opening each seal successively.

By reference to the Old Testament Scriptures, we

Ezra vii. 12, find that Rolls were used by the Prophets, in which  
 Isa. viii. 1; were written the judgments of the LORD against par-  
 Jer. xxxvi. ticular nations and people. And we shall find in the  
 2, 1.; II. 29, opening of this Sealed Roll, that it contains also God's  
 64; Ezek. acting in and among the nations of Christendom,  
 II. 9, 10, and directing and overruling all events for the one great  
 III. 1-4; end of preparing the way for, and of bringing in, the  
 Zech. v. 1- righteous rule and government of the LORD, that the  
 4. kingdoms of the earth may be given to Him as His  
 rightful inheritance. As the former rolls referred to in  
 the Old Testament contained prophecies of the deliver-  
 ance of Israel from their Babylonish captivity, which  
 was typical of the Church's captivity in the mystical  
 Babylon, and of God's dealings towards the nations,  
 so this roll will be found to contain the history of  
 Christendom, or the acts of God among the baptized  
 nations, to bring in the kingdom of His SON; and by  
 its seven distinct seals, representing, as they do, seven  
 great periods of its history, it embraces the whole dis-  
 pensation. This "Roll is written within and with-  
 out," to represent that the events symbolized therein  
 relate to the external acts of God's Providence among  
 the nations as well as to the hidden and evil principles  
 which have wrought among the people in producing  
 these events. For the outward acts are always the  
 results of an inward spiritual working, and as such all  
 God-fearing men might read and understand them.

"And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud  
 voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose  
 the seals thereof? and no man in heaven, nor in earth,  
 neither under the earth, was able to open the book,  
 neither to look thereon." This mighty angel is sym-  
 bolic of those ministers of CHRIST, who in every period  
 of the Church's history have called the attention of

men to the prophetic word, and to the action of God's Providence in the world. But none have been able to interpret the Roll or explain its contents, though the seals have been successively opened by Him Who sitteth upon the throne.

"And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open, and to read the book, neither to look thereon." The great sorrow expressed by S. John on account of there being no interpreter, shows the spirit in which truly Christian men manifest their feelings when they see no interpreter present to unfold the prophetic word, and the mysteries of God's Providence among the nations, or when they see none who have a steady faith to look upon, and regard passing events as the fulfilment of God's Word among the nations, working salvation in the midst of the earth.

"And one of the Elders said unto me, Weep not: behold,—the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof." These words point to a period when the Church should regain the power she had lost of interpreting the vision. The Elder that appears and tells the beloved disciple not to weep, represents, as we have seen, the highest form of ministry in the Church of CHRIST, and he refers to Him from Whom his authority and power are derived, even to the Lion of the tribe of Judah and Root of David—the Prince of the Apostles; showing us, that as the Church lost its power, through unfaithfulness, to unfold the prophecy, so it is only by a restoration of its primitive ordinances that the Church will be able fully to understand the vision, and read the roll.

"And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of

the Elders, stood a Lamb, as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." The vision of CHRIST, in the midst of the throne, as a Lamb slain, and surrounded by the living creatures and Elders, represents Him under that aspect or character in which as the one all-perfect sacrifice, He has prevailed with God in behalf of His Church, and not for His Church only, but for the sins of all mankind; through which sacrifice, man not only regains his forfeited inheritance, but attains unto that dominion and power in which the LORD is represented upon the throne. If an objection be raised against the introduction of two symbolic representations of the same person in one vision, the answer is that it would be impossible to exhibit the LORD in the two-fold aspect required by *one* symbolic figure; moreover the same objection would apply to the terms, "lamps of fire" and "eyes of fire," as symbolic of the HOLY GHOST; and to the representation of the same ministry under the form of "a living creature like a lion," and "the Elders." There is no inconsistency, therefore, in the LORD JESUS being revealed in the same vision in two distinct characters under two different emblems, but it is in analogy with the whole revelation. The "*horn*" is an emblem of power; and the *seven* horns are here used to denote the fulness of the *power* of the HOLY GHOST, which is in CHRIST, as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world;" and the "seven eyes" symbolize the perfect discernment of the HOLY GHOST which is in Him; that is,—the fulness of *power* and the fulness of *light*, which was the twofold form of witness seen in CHRIST, when on the earth, and which should be manifested now, in the Church, as at the beginning,

Dent. xxxiii.  
17; Psalm  
cxxxii 17;  
Dan. viii. 3,  
5, 6.

S. John i.  
29.

according to His own Word which He spake unto His Apostles,—“Ye shall bear witness, and the HOLY S. John xv. 26, 27. GHOST also.”

“And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat on the throne;” and who we have just seen represents the same person under another aspect or form of manifestation. The “Lamb” is descriptive of Him in His human nature in which He made the atonement,—“The Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world;” and the “One” seated on the throne represents Him more in His Divine nature as the GOD-MAN or Ruler. Whilst the “Lamb” represents the LORD JESUS, as we have said, in the truth and verity of His human nature as man, having the fulness of revelation and of power; His taking the Roll out of the hand of the “One” seated on the throne, shows that He receives all revelation in virtue of His being God as well as Man; and that it is from CHRIST glorified that all revelation proceeds; the “Lamb,” and the “One” seated on the throne, being representations of the same Person under two distinct aspects,—the REDEEMER, and LORD of all. The roll being taken out of “*the right hand*,” which is also an emblem of power, reveals to us the power which He exercises in the providence of God, overruling all things for the good of His Church, and causing them to work together for the furthering of His eternal purpose; and therefore He is represented as communicating from the beginning the history of those events in which the Church is concerned, and as speaking of those things which are not as though they were.

“And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders, fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and

golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of all saints." Here, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders, are described as moved in an especial manner to acts of worship, when it is known to them that the Lamb had prevailed to reveal the purposes of God, and the secret of His providential actings in relation to the bringing in of His Kingdom. They have each of them *harp*s, and *golden vials full of odours or incense*, whereby is represented their great joy in the Spirit, at the prospect of the manifestation of His glorious power, and their participation in His rule and government, and also their privilege of giving forth the truth of His revelation, and of being intercessors with God for its speedy fulfilment.

"And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests, and we shall reign on the earth." The song which they sing is called "*new*" in contradistinction to the old one which celebrated the triumph of the LORD by Moses over His fleshly enemies, Pharaoh and his hosts; whereas His triumphs now are over Satan and his hosts, the prince of darkness, and the god of this world, the spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience. "We wrestle not," saith S. Paul, "against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against wicked spirits in high places." If such be the conflict, how great will be the victory! What deliverance, and what glory await those under whose feet Satan shall be bruised! The song which they sing, plainly intimates to us also, that the living creatures as well as the Elders represent *men*, and not spiritual

Eph. vi. 12.

beings such as the angelic hosts, for they say, "Thou hast redeemed us." This declaration, therefore, is an entire refutation of every other theory which would make these living creatures to represent the celestial hierarchy, or to symbolize the attributes of God, and confirms the interpretation we have previously given. We remark also that in their song they speak of being redeemed from four classes of mankind, "kindred and tongue and people and nation," which classification seems to point out a fourfold character among the nations upon earth, answering to a fourfold ministry in the Church. The declaration—"Thou hast made us unto God Kings and Priests," expresses the high dignity and glory to which the Church is called, even to be one with Him Who is the true Melchisedec of God—God's King and Priest upon His throne. The third declaration contained in their song—"We shall reign on the earth," refutes those mistaken notions which some entertain respecting the earth, as though it should some day be annihilated, and the saints be caught away no one knows where. But as it is said in the foregoing part of the vision, that all things were created by Him and *for* Him, so we are told in the latter part of the same vision, that on this earth, on which He once walked as the "Man of sorrows" and shed His blood, He shall reign as King, and all His saints with Him. *Here*, His glory shall be pre-eminently revealed: for *here* will He erect His throne, and from hence as from the metropolitan city, and the centre of His government, shall His Word go forth unto all principalities and powers. And of His kingdom *here* established there shall be no end.

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures,

and the elders ; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Angels, being here mentioned as taking part in the worship of CHRIST'S Church in connexion with the living creatures, direct us to the vision of Isaiah containing the mystery of the Seraphim, which are said to be round about the throne of the LORD of Hosts, giving glory unto His great Name, while the temple of

Isa. vi. 1—4. God was filled with incense. This vision, like the one we are considering, evidently relates to the kingdom-state, when the glory of the LORD JESUS and His Church shall be fully manifested. The Seraphim, as we before observed, are descriptive of the angelic ministry in the Church, and the living creatures, which are evidently identical with the Cherubim described in Ezek. i. 10. Ezekiel, of the fourfold ministry, the four and twenty elders being the two bands of the Apostles, as before explained. So that in this vision, we have revealed the mystery of the Cherubim and Seraphim, and also the Elders of the universal Church, as embodying and heading up all the redeemed. Therefore their voices are described as the voices of an innumerable multitude : for they are ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. It is not improbable that in relation to these combined prophecies, reference is made to the Cherubim and Seraphim in that magnificent hymn of praise the "Te Deum,"—"We praise Thee, O God ; we acknowledge Thee to be the LORD : To Thee *Cherubin and Seraphin* continually do cry, Holy, holy, holy, LORD GOD of Sabaoth. *The holy Church throughout all the world* doth acknowledge



Thee." The *sevenfold* ascription which S. John also heard in this vision, made unto the Lamb, in number as well as in designation, comprises everything that can be ascribed to Him as the All-perfect One; and Who alone as Head of His body the Church, is worthy to receive it; and therefore, it is to Him, as the Lamb, that this ascription is given. But to make this song of praise complete, S. John says:—

"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, blessing and honour, and glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the four and twenty Elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever." This, and the foregoing ascription, comprise and are suitable to, the twofold character of CHRIST revealed in this vision, as the Lamb, and as Him that sitteth upon the throne. The former *sevenfold* ascription is due to Him as the Lamb; the latter *fourfold* ascription is due to Him as King and LORD of all. And this latter is not only of a fourfold character, but it proceeds from four localities, designated, "*heaven, earth, under the earth, and sea,*" affording additional evidence that it is to Him as the Ruler that the ascription in this fourfold form is made, it being also presented to Him by those who are associated with Him in His government. The *Amen*, proceeding from the four living creatures is expressive of their sanction and hearty concurrence in these doxologies. And the adoration of the four and twenty Elders who fall down and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, shows their perfect unity, and devotion to the LORD, as His servants.

From the whole of this vision, then, containing, as it does, the emblems of regal power and dominion, we cannot but conclude, that the seals, to which it is prefatory, present a phase of Christian history of the same character, and in this we shall be confirmed when we come to consider their interpretation. That which next claims our attention, is—

#### THE PREFATORY VISION TO THE TRUMPETS.

Rev. viii. 2—  
6.

2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne.

4 And the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast *it* into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

It would seem that any one conversant with the symbolic language of the holy Scriptures, and who understands the office which CHRIST is now sustaining in heaven as the High Priest of our profession, would have no difficulty in apprehending at once, that this vision represents the LORD as our Mediator and Intercessor, standing in the presence of God for us, and offering the prayers and intercessions of all saints; nor could such an one fail to perceive that it is in an ecclesiastical character that He appears at the altar, presenting Himself as the Angel and High Priest of His Church. A due attention to the details of the vision will, we trust, fully confirm this view, and leave no

doubt on the mind of our readers of the character in which our LORD is here revealed to the Apostle.

“And I saw the seven angels which stood before God ; and to them were given seven trumpets.” These angels are mentioned emphatically as *THE seven*, and also as having been seen occupying that position before in the presence of God. The “many Rev. v. 11. angels standing round about the throne,” are, as we have explained, the angels of the Churches giving glory unto the Lamb, in the anticipation of that kingdom in which they shall reign with CHRIST on the earth. The seven angels to whom the Epistles were addressed, were the angels of the seven Churches in Asia, which, as we have seen, are representative of this class of ministry in the universal Church. There are no other seven angels mentioned in this book previous to this vision but these seven. And as S. John speaks of them as those “*which stood*” before God, and designates them emphatically “*THE SEVEN*,” they must be the seven referred to, and be here taken to represent the High Priestly office of the Holy Catholic Church.

The *trumpet* also, given to each of the seven angels, shows further, that it is in an ecclesiastical or priestly aspect they are presented to us, as the trumpet is an ecclesiastical emblem, whose origin and use were in connexion with a priestly nation, and under a theocratic government, of which the Christian Church is the antetype.

Another intimation of its ecclesiastical character is the golden *altar*, at which the angel stands with his golden *censer*, to whom also much *incense* is given, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints. And as these are all ecclesiastical symbols, or emblems, they

must be interpreted as having relation to ecclesiastical objects and events. Thus, for instance, the fire of the altar must be symbolic of the same thing of which the

*Levit. ix. 24.* fire upon the Jewish altar was symbolic. Fire from heaven fell upon the sacrifices offered at the dedication of the tabernacle, and also on the sacrifice at the dedication of the temple ; and this fire, which consumed the sacrifice on the altar, was commanded to be kept burning day and night, and was never to go out.

*Levit. vi. 9 —13.* The sacrifice was called a “ burnt offering,” because of “ the burning upon the altar all night until the

*Levit. vi. 9.* morning ;” “ and the fire of the altar shall be burning in it.” And we know that the fire which descended upon the Jewish altars was symbolical of the descent of the HOLY GHOST at Pentecost. The HOLY GHOST was given after the ascension of the LORD into heaven, there to present before the FATHER that ONE oblation and offering of Himself which He ever pleads in the presence of God for us ; filling the most holy place with the incense of His intercession. Having entered into heaven with His own blood, He did, according to His most gracious promise, send down the HOLY GHOST ; that fire from God which consumed the sacrifice, then presented before Him, in the hundred and twenty, who were met together with one accord in one

*Acts i. ii. 1 —4.* place, waiting the fulfilment of His Word. And we are told that the HOLY SPIRIT, assuming the appearance of cloven tongues as of fire, sat upon each of them ; and they were all filled with the HOLY GHOST, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

We would here remind ourselves and our Christian brethren of the solemn obligations which rest upon us,

*Rom. xii. 1, 2.* to “ present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, and

acceptable unto God, as our most reasonable service ; that not being conformed to this world, but being transformed by the renewing of our mind, we may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect Will of God." This acceptable sacrifice of the Church should have remained burning on the altar all the night of this dispensation, until the morning of the resurrection ; and this fire of the HOLY GHOST should never have been quenched !

" And the angel took the censer and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth, and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake." These emblems have relation to acts or events done among men, and in this ecclesiastical phase they refer to Church, and not to state affairs. Of the effect which this fire produced when it was cast into the earth we are fully informed in the Acts of the Apostles. The "*voices*" are the utterances of prophetic word, which we know from the writings of the New Testament to have been a characteristic sign, not of any ordinance, but of the presence of the HOLY GHOST in every member of the Spiritual Body ; for at Pentecost, they *all* spake with tongues, and prophesied as the Spirit gave them utterance. "*Thunder*" is expressive of the Voice of God in His Church, through the ordinance of Apostles, as it is written, "The LORD God thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave His Voice." The "*lightnings*" represent the revelation of God's Mind and Will by the Word of Prophecy, and in connexion with "*the thunderings,*" are referable to those ordinances of the LORD, by which He gave His revelations and commandments, at the beginning, that is, through Apostles and Prophets. "The voice of Thy thunder was in the heavens, the lightnings en-

Ps. xviii. 13;  
lxxxiv.

lightened the world." There was also "*an earthquake*." We know that this emblem, when used in regard to the nations, represents a change from one form of government to that of another, or what is called a revolution. But an ecclesiastical earthquake is a change from one form of religion to another; and we read that the gift of the HOLY GHOST produced among men a complete revolution of mind and sentiment, and consequently of action. For immediately after the descent of this fire of God, multitudes were convinced of the declaration of Peter, that "this same JESUS whom they had crucified was made both LORD and CHRIST;" no less than three thousand were converted in one day, and many of the priests became obedient unto the faith.

Acts ii. 26.

Acts vi. 7.

We may also remark, that the things symbolised in this vision took place in the same sequential order in which they are here mentioned. First, "There were voices;" and we are told that when the HOLY SPIRIT descended from heaven and rested on the disciples, Acts ii. 5, 11, "they all spake with tongues, and devout Jews from every nation under heaven heard them speak in their own tongues the wonderful works of God." Secondly, there were "*thunderings*;" the Apostles, being endowed with power from on high, gave forth the word and commandment of the LORD, and the disciples continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers. Thirdly, there were "*lightnings*," the LORD giving some men to be prophets, which is the ordinance for revelation, for the opening of mysteries, even the deep things of God, and they are mentioned as being second in the Church—"first Apostles, secondarily prophets." Fourthly, "there was a great *earthquake*," or a great moral and

Acts ii. 4, 3.

spiritual revolution took place on the face of society ; so much so, that the charge brought against them before the rulers of Athens was, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." Acts xvii. 6.

It will, we think, be acknowledged by all who read our exposition of this prefatory vision, that it is descriptive of the character and constitution of CHRIST'S Church at the beginning of the dispensation ; but, as we have already intimated, it should not apply only to that period, but to all periods of the Church's history, and be ever fulfilling until the Church be perfected in glory, and that "Royal Priesthood and holy nation," 1 S. Pet. ii. 9. be manifested, which shall offer up the worship of all creation. It therefore follows the analogy of the prefatory visions to the seals, and is a proper introduction to that series of events which are revealed under the Trumpets, and which terminate in the consummation of this purpose.

#### PREFATORY REMARKS CONCERNING THE VIALS.

We hope in these remarks clearly to show, that the prefatory visions to the Vials, given in chapter xv., are in their action contemporaneous with the Epistles, Seals, and Trumpets. The *Vials* are said to contain the seven last plagues in which are filled up the wrath of God. And the Apostle is shown a company, of whom it is said, they have gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. Now as these Vials in their commencement are said, in chapter xvi., to inflict a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and

upon them which worshipped his image, it becomes necessary for us to fall back upon the three preceding chapters, to ascertain what is the mystery of the beast and his image, and who are the favoured company that obtain this victory over him.

It is confidently asserted that because these plagues are called the last, they must necessarily be last in reference to time or sequence, and that they cannot run parallel in their action with the seals and trumpets. Hence some have imagined that the vials are contained in the seventh trumpet, and that their out-pouring commences when this trumpet is sounded. They have viewed the seals and trumpets as bringing judgments upon the world, and have explained the vials as being a continuation of the same judgments; and therefore as they are called the *last* plagues, in which the wrath of God is filled up, they have supposed that they must of necessity follow the sounding of the seventh trumpet. This hypothesis is grounded on the supposition that no other meaning can be attached to the word "last," but that of the order of time. The subject, however, fairly considered, will discover its untenableness. For although there will be undoubtedly a filling up of the wrath of God when the apostacy is consummated, yet as there has been an apostacy in the Church from the beginning, and tares have been mingled with the wheat from the time the first sowers of the word went forth to sow in the Gospel field, it is manifest, there have ever been the children of the devil and the children of God, growing up simultaneously, and within the same holy inclosure. And the LORD said, "Let them both grow up together until the harvest, lest, in pulling up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them." We learn also from the para-

Vide S. Matt.  
xiii.



ble of the *leaven* which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened, that no sooner was the pure word of the kingdom preached than it became corrupted with heretical doctrine, even with "the old leaven of malice and wickedness." Even from the *first* there was an *Apostacy*—"one of the twelve" fell from the apostleship, into whom Satan entered, and who betrayed his LORD for thirty pieces of silver. And in the Acts we have Ananias and Sapphira who lied to the HOLY GHOST. We read also in the Apostolic Epistles of the working of Satan among the baptized; and S. Paul, expressing his godly jealousy for the Church at Corinth, says, "I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity which is in CHRIST." In writing to the Galatians, he says, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of CHRIST, unto another Gospel; which is not another, but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the Gospel of CHRIST." And in his Epistle to the Philippians, he says, "Many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of CHRIST; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." And this is put in opposition with God's children. "For," adds the Apostle, "our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we look for the SAVIOUR, the LORD JESUS CHRIST." The Church of CHRIST, as constituted on the day of Pentecost, is a new creation. It is that body in which God is manifested, by the inworking of the FATHER, the ministries of the SON, and the gifts of the HOLY GHOST. But many who had been baptized

Gal. i. 6, 7.

Phil. iii. 18, 19.

Phil. iii. 20.

into CHRIST soon turned away from the faith of the Gospel, and falling from their spiritual standing, became earthly, sensual, devilish. Many assumed a profession of Christianity, but denied its power. Many, having not the Spirit, sought to be made perfect by the flesh, substituting the reasoning faculty of man for the word of the Spirit, measuring and judging spiritual things by the intellect, and seeking to attain unto perfection by the understanding only. Their affections were placed on things beneath, not on things above, where CHRIST sitteth on the right hand of God; and being without the Spirit, with their affections still alienated from God, they soon became like the *beasts* that perish. Seeking their portion in this life, they loved not the LORD's appearing, nor looked for His kingdom, but perverted and wrested the Scriptures to their own destruction, of whom were Hymenæus, and Philetus. *So early* did the dragon, (the devil,) gain power in the heavens or spiritual firmament of CHRIST's Church; *so soon* were the principles from beneath manifested among the baptized; *so early* were men, by seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, led captive by Satan, the prince of this world! In relation to these things, S. Paul said, "*The mystery of iniquity doth already work.*" And S. John said, "Even now are there many antichrists, and many false prophets are gone out into the world." That which distinguished the children of God from the children of the devil, was the practical acknowledgment, "that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh." The children of the wicked one confessed not this truth, but denied it, not walking in obedience to the LORD in His ordinances. Although many bare the name of CHRIST, and professed to be His, yet were they a seed of evil doers.

<sup>2</sup> Thess. ii.  
7.

<sup>1</sup> S. John ii.  
18.

<sup>1</sup> S. John iv.  
1-6.

As the Scribes and Pharisees of old professed to be Abraham's seed, but were nevertheless, according to our LORD's judgment, the children of the devil, upon whom judgment came, even the worst of judgments, that of being sealed up in their own wickedness; so in the Christian Church, there has ever been a seed of the Serpent upon whom judgment has fallen in their being given over to judicial blindness as the consummation of their iniquities. And as God's last act of judgment with apostate men, is to give them over to believe a lie, because they love not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness, so it is not difficult to see, that these last judgments mentioned in this prophecy have a true and literal application, according to the form which this wickedness and apostacy assumes.

It is not, perhaps, sufficiently remembered that our LORD forewarned His Apostles of an apostacy which would immediately appear. This forms a prominent feature in most of our LORD's parables. In the S. Luke xi. 24-26. parable of the man who was dispossessed of an evil spirit, and cleansed, and who was subsequently indwelt by seven other spirits, and of whom it is said, his *last* end is worse than the first, is shown the fearful condition into which many of the baptized would come, who count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and do despite unto the Spirit of grace. In the parable of the sower, our LORD shows, under a four-fold aspect, the consequences which would attend the preached word from the beginning. In the case of the way-side hearers, *Satan* is said to be the immediate agent of leading them to give up the truth. Those hearers who are described in the seed sown on stony ground, receive it with gladness, but having no root in

S. Matt. xiii.  
S. Mark iv.

S. John iii.  
36.

Eph. v. 6.

Vide 1 Thess.  
ii. 7.

themselves, endure but for a season : afterwards, when affliction or persecution ariseth because of the word, immediately they are offended. A third form of declension and falling away is pointed out in those who yield to the temptations of this world, by which the word is choked and becometh unfruitful. The fourth description of hearers, likened unto good ground, shows that there is a remnant in the midst of those who fall away, in whom the seed of the word of life is preserved : for they bring forth fruit, some thirty fold, some sixty, and some an hundred. That the parable of the tares, of which we have already spoken, had an immediate application to the apostolic or primitive times, there can be no question : for the *tares*, which are the children of the devil, appeared in the Gospel field simultaneously with the wheat, the children of God. And whether at the beginning of the dispensation, or at its close, when both tares and wheat are matured, the one gathered into the garner, and the other cast into the fire which cannot be quenched, it is clear that on the children of the wicked one, judgment has ever rested, even in this world. As it is written by S. John, “He that believeth not in the SON of GOD shall not see life, but the wrath of GOD abideth on him.” S. Paul also, exhorting the Ephesians to be followers of GOD as dear children, and to renounce all fleshly lusts says,—“Let no man deceive you with vain words ; for because of these things cometh the wrath of GOD upon the children of disobedience.”

It is evident that the apostacy spoken of by our LORD and His Apostles commenced in *their* days, “the mystery of iniquity did already work,” and the *forms* which this spiritual wickedness would assume during the time of the Church’s trial until the coming

of the LORD are, we believe, delineated in the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of this book.

At the beginning, the apostacy assumed a very spiritual form—the seed of the serpent worked very subtilly: of which we have intimation in the Epistle to the Church at Ephesus, under the description of some who “said they were Apostles and were not.” Of these seducers S. Paul had occasion to complain, and warn the churches. “For such are false Apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of CHRIST. And no marvel: for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works.” How greatly Satan prevailed over many of the ministers of CHRIST, (the stars of heaven), who were set in the Church to guide and defend the flock, is evident from the third Epistle of S. John. For as S. Paul before complained of Demas and others having forsaken him through the love of this present evil world, and of the turning away of all them of Asia from him, so in this later Epistle by S. John, it appears that the apostacy from the faith and obedience of CHRIST had greatly increased; for he says, “I wrote unto the Church; but Diotrephes receiveth us not. Wherefore if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the Church.” S. Peter also, describing the apostacy, or spiritual evil which was working in the Church, warns them of false *prophets*, and false *teachers*, privily bringing in damnable heresies, even denying the LORD that

<sup>2</sup> Cor. xi. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Tim. iv. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Tim. i. 15.

<sup>3</sup> S. John 9.  
10.

<sup>2</sup> S. Pet. ii. 1.

2 S. Pet. ii.  
12, 13.

bought them. "These," he says, "as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things which they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; and shall receive the recompense of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings, while they feast with you; . . . . For it had

2 S. Pet. ii.  
21, 22.

been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire." S. Jude also in his general Epistle speaketh thus;

S. Jude 4.

—"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there *are* certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation; ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only LORD God, and our LORD JESUS CHRIST. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."

S. Jude 12,  
13.

It is most manifest, therefore, from the Apostolic Epistles, that these evil workers were in the Church at the beginning, and that they were not obscure in-

dividuals, but men who had taken the lead and guidance of others, having assumed the office of Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers. These apostates made things in the Church conform to, and be congenial with, their love of the world. And having their portion in this life they followed its course, and adopted its maxims and principles; and consequently were opposed to the true disciples of CHRIST, who were not of this world, but, like their Divine Master, testified of it, that its works were evil; and whose citizenship being in heaven, they patiently waited the fulfilment of His promise, "I will come again and receive you unto My-<sup>S. John xiv. 3.</sup> self, that where I am, there ye may be also." But those who had turned away from the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and chosen the things of this world for their portion, renounced the hope of the Gospel, and scoffingly asked—"Where is the promise<sup>2 S. Pet. iii. 4.</sup> of His coming?" They spake according to the desire of their heart, and wished that all things might continue as they were. And in a very short time, these false teachers became so dominant, that the greater part of the professing body turned away from the Apostles whom the LORD had given as their rulers and guides.

We learn, then, from the writings of the New Testament that almost every form of evil existed at the beginning of the dispensation. Satan having gained an entrance into the Church, occupied its spiritual region, and adapted his working to its spiritual condition. And these Vials, in which are filled up the wrath of God, reveal His last acting towards apostates. They are judicial visitations, which come upon those who fill up the measure of their iniquity, and therefore God's *last acts* in which are filled up His wrath. The

word **LAST**, in regard to the vials, does *not* then, as some have imagined, imply that they are to be poured out at the *end* of this dispensation, but *they reveal His last judicial acts, or righteous judgments in His dealings with apostates in each period of Christian history.*

These vials, therefore, take a much wider and larger range than is generally supposed, embracing, as we believe, the whole dispensation. In each period, men have filled up the measure of their iniquity, and brought upon themselves the just recompense of their sin. And the last fearful act of apostacy, which will be consummated by the baptized nations, during the seventh or last period, will bring down upon them the contents of the last vial of the wrath of Almighty God. When we view things as God views them, and discern spiritual things in the light of the HOLY GHOST, we shall be able to perceive how exactly the judgments of God correspond to the iniquity which has occasioned them. And there have been always those in the Church who have observed and justified God in His judicial visitations, especially in the earlier periods of its history. Every sin against God, whether it be that of an individual, a family, a church, or nation, must necessarily bring with it its corresponding visitation of judgment. This is universally true, and especially so in relation to those who have been brought into covenant with God. The LORD said of His people Israel—"You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I visit [marginal reading] you, for all your iniquities." If the Divine judgments which fell upon Israel had not been recorded in their history, that history would have been imperfect, and that too, in one of its most important features. For the judgments which happened to them, were for ex-

Amos iii. 2.

1 Cor. x. 1—  
11.



amples, or types, or figures (τύποι), and are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the age are come, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. In like manner, if the judicial part of Christian history had not been given, not only would the history be imperfect, but we should fail to derive from it the instruction and admonition it was intended to convey, in that particular. For each four-fold series of prophecy, having in it, also, a sevenfoldness, whilst it has a special relation to and fulfilment in the period to which it belongs, is also of universal use and application. And the Church might derive great instruction if she would take a retrospective view of all her past history, as revealed in the prophecy of this book. For not only is there a Spiritual, Civil, and Ecclesiastical, but there is also a Judicial phase given us of each period of her history, justifying God in all His acts, and showing how every visitation has been administered in righteousness, and was exactly suited to the evil upon which it was sent.

From not regarding the vials in this light, the *time* when they commenced their action, as well as the true *nature* of the judgments which they ministered, have been greatly misunderstood. Some have supposed them to commence in A.D. 1793, and have made their fulfilment to consist in those temporal judgments which followed the French Revolution. But such an idea betrays an entire misapprehension of the *nature* of the judgments which the vials symbolize, and which are infinitely more awful than any temporal calamities. It is declared, that in them is "*filled up the wrath of God*;" showing that they must relate to *spiritual* judgments; for in temporal judgments His wrath can never be filled up, neither would they as temporal

Amos viii.  
11, 12.

Isa. vi. 10—  
13.

Ps. lxi. 23—  
28.

judgments be in every case applicable to national sins. The language of all Scripture declares that the heaviest judgments which can fall on mankind are those which are spiritual and eternal. Thus, for example, the prophet Amos, summing up the visitations of God upon Israel, adverts to judgments of this description, as the *last*, the most *severe*, and the most *awful*. “Behold the days come, saith the LORD God, that I will send a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the Words of the LORD.” In like manner the prophet Isaiah declared the last and heaviest judgments which should befall the Jewish nation, in these words—“Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed.” And when Israel would not obey the voice of the LORD, and made void His law, the judgments pronounced upon them were most suitable to their condition, and the most terrible that could come upon them. “Let their table (that is the table of their law,) become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened that they see not, and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out Thine indignation upon them, and let Thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents. For they persecute HIM Whom Thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom Thou hast wounded. Add iniquity unto their iniquity; and let them not come into Thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.” As judgments of this description

righteously fell upon the people of God when they rejected the Law and the Prophets, and sealed up the measure of their iniquity by rejecting and slaying Him of Whom these testified, so those judgments which a rejected *Gospel* brings, accord in all respects to the sin committed. How solemn is the language of S. Paul in this respect! “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the HOLY GHOST, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain which cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessings from God: but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.” These spiritual judgments, however, which rest upon apostates, are no doubt often accompanied with temporal calamities, as the book of the Revelation sufficiently testifies, and as we may also learn from the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Isaiah says, “The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left, &c.” But though temporal visitations may often accompany, or be involved in these spiritual judgments which apostates bring upon themselves, yet the wrath of God is by no means filled up in them, neither indeed can be. Temporal judgments, however awful,

Heb. vi. 2—8.

Isa. xxiv.

are, when compared with spiritual, but as the small dust upon the balance ! And what language can adequately describe the judicial visitations of God which those who reject the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST bring upon themselves ! How solemnly does S. Paul show the certainty and terribleness of such a visitation !

Heb. ii. 2—  
4; and x. 28, 31. “For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward : how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ; which at the first began to be spoken by the LORD, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him : God also bearing them witness both by signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the HOLY GHOST according to His own Will ?” And again. “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses ; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the SON of GOD, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace ! For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the LORD. And again, The LORD shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” The *last* plagues, then, commencing, as they do, upon a people to whom have been committed the Gospel of the grace of God, and the gift of the HOLY GHOST, though involving temporal judgments, must necessarily be in themselves of a spiritual character. These vials of God’s wrath come upon a people who fill up the measure of their iniquity by rejecting the Gospel of His SON. Their being called, therefore, “the seven last plagues in which are filled up the wrath of God,” re-

veals to us their true import, their awfulness, and the fearful and irremediable condition of those on whom these vials are poured. And those who are the subjects of these plagues, "after their hardness and impenitent hearts, treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;" in that day, when the LORD Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not His Gospel, who shall be punished with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the LORD and from the glory of His power.

These prefatory observations on the vials will assist us in forming a true idea of those forms of evil on which the vials are poured out. To this we will now apply ourselves by an examination of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters in which these forms of iniquity are revealed.

## PART V.

THE FOUR FORMS OF EVIL ON WHICH THE JUDGMENTS ARE  
POURED OUT AS REVEALED IN CHAPTERS XII., XIII., AND  
XIV. NAMELY: THE SPIRITUAL, THE CIVIL, THE ECCLE-  
SIASTICAL, AND THE SUPERNATURAL. CONSUMMATION OF  
THE APOSTACY. PREFATORY VISION TO THE VIALS.

### THE FIRST, OR SPIRITUAL FORM OF EVIL.

Rev. xii.

1 AND there appeared a great wonder in heaven ; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars :

2 And she being with child cried, *travailing* in birth, and pained to be delivered.

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven ; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth : and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron : and her child was caught up unto God, and *to* His throne.

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days.

7 And there was war in heaven : Michael and his angels fought against the dragon ; and the dragon fought and his angels,

8 And prevailed not ; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world : he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His CHRIST: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

12 Therefore rejoice, *ye* heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitors of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man *child*.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of JESUS CHRIST.

IN this chapter we have presented to us under a *spiritual* aspect, the continual struggle which has ever existed between the children of God and the children of the wicked one.

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” The vision is “*in heaven*,” the region of the spiritual, where the Church of CHRIST dwelleth, being “raised up Eph. ii. 6. together with Him, and made to sit with Him in the heavenlies.” The woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of

twelve stars, is emblematical of the spiritual Body of CHRIST, as constituted and organized on the day of Pentecost. The name by which the Church is here designated, is the same as that given unto Eve, when the LORD GOD formed her out of the substance of Adam, and which name signifies that she was taken out of man, as it is said, "She shall be called *woman*, because she was taken out of man." S. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians, refers to this history as typical of CHRIST and His Church. As at the beginning of the creation, Eve was called woman, because she was taken out of man; so at the beginning of the new creation, when the Church of CHRIST was formed, and she derived her spiritual existence from Him, the second Adam, she is represented under the emblem of a woman. She also derives all her light and glory from CHRIST, her risen LORD, "the Sun of Righteousness and King of glory." "The moon is seen under her feet." This emblem is used because it was by lunar time that all the Jewish or fleshly ordinances were regulated, and represents the Church as standing above them, or as having attained unto that spiritual and heavenly state, of which the former was only the type and shadow. "The crown of twelve stars upon her head" represents the twelvefold Apostleship, which she received at the beginning, when the twelve being endowed with power from on high, went forth in the name of the LORD to declare Him among the nations, even as He Himself had been sent forth of the FATHER. In this symbol we are reminded how the heavenly things were shadowed forth under the Old Testament. For as the twelve patriarchs, (who were represented under this symbol in Joseph's dream,) became heads of the fleshly Israel, so did the twelve

Gen. ii. 23.

Eph. v. 31,  
32.



Apostles become the heads of the spiritual Israel. Hence S. James addresses his Epistle to "the twelve tribes," i.e., those who had received the Gospel of the grace of God, being baptized into CHRIST, and made partakers of His Spirit. The Apostles were called emphatically "*the twelve*," as constituting the number of the Apostleship, whose names are written in the *foundations* of the wall of the Holy City, the new Jerusalem which cometh down from God out of heaven, having twelve gates, and twelve foundations; and on the gates are written the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. Rev. xxi.  
12-14.

"And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." This figure is expressive of the longing desire of the Church for the glorious manifestation of the sons of God as the first fruits. "We ourselves," says S. Paul, "who have received the first fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." Isaiah speaks of this hope of the Church in the same symbolic language—"Like as a woman with child that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in Thy sight, O LORD. We have been with child, we have been in pain." And then complaining, as though her efforts had been fruitless, she is comforted by these words of the LORD—"Thy dead shall live. My dead Body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." Our LORD also uses the same metaphorical language in relation to the Christian Church, and likens the time of her sorrow to the period of child-bearing, and the time of her rejoicing to the joy which is felt at the birth of the child. "A woman Rom. viii.  
23.  
  
Isa. xxvi.  
17, 18.  
  
S. John xvi.  
17-19.  
  
S. John xvi.  
21, 22.

when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come : but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now, therefore, have sorrow : but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." It is, therefore, the Church of CHRIST, which labours to bring forth the man-child. The time of His absence is the time of her sorrow, and the time of her rejoicing the time of His appearing, when the dead in CHRIST shall be raised.

"And there appeared another wonder in heaven, and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth : and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born." No sooner was the purpose of God revealed in His Church, and her children filled with the hope of coming glory, than the devil sought to prevent its fulfilment, and to destroy the hope by using all the power and subtilty of which he was capable. As a spirit, he gained an entrance into the spiritual region of the Church, and simulated there the plenitude of wisdom, power, and dominion, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his head : for these represent spiritual rule and oversight, after the forms and spirit of the world, forestalling the kingdom, and reigning in spirit before the time ; thus bringing in the mystery of iniquity, which S. Paul said worked in his time, and referring to which he says, writing to the Corinthians, "Ye have reigned as kings without us, and would to God ye did reign that we might reign with you." The

<sup>2</sup> Thess. ii. 7.

<sup>1</sup> Cor. iv. 8.

number *seven*, here used, represents this "working of Satan," as perfected in spirit; and *ten* represent it as imitative of the kingdom, its cube one thousand, being the number of its years. The mystery of iniquity, as here symbolized, has been seen in the spirit of those who have sat in high or heavenly places as lords over God's heritage, exercising dominion over the faith and consciences of the saints, promising them liberty, but making them servants and slaves of corruption: for "of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage." They have also taught that this age is the period of the kingdom of CHRIST, as though His kingdom had been *from hence*, or of *this world*, and that the Church should possess dominion *now*, instead of being strangers and pilgrims upon the earth, travailing in pain and waiting for deliverance. "The *tail* of the dragon" represents false prophets or teachers, by whom the devil seduces, and casts down those who have been called to the sacred office of the ministry of CHRIST, and who should be the spiritual shepherds and instructors of His flock. As it is written, "The prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail." By this tail of the dragon many of these stars of heaven have been cast down to the earth. They have fallen from their spiritual standing, and become earthly, sensual, and devilish, even like the beasts that perish. Instead of sitting with CHRIST in the heavens, they have become of the earth earthy. The dragon succeeded in casting down the *third* part of these stars from heaven. This is expressive of a class of ministers who are especially subject to such temptations, as we shall have occasion to show when we come to the interpretation of the trumpet or ecclesiastical series of this prophecy. We may, however,

2S. Pet. ii. 19.

remark, that the casting down of the *third* part of the stars, has assumed an outward manifestation, which may be apprehended by the fact, that Christendom has been divided into three great sections, Greek, Roman and Protestant, not one of which exhibits or maintains the perfect and equal co-operation of the Persons in the ever blessed and indivisible Godhead. For each of these divisions has exhibited an exaggerated view of one or other of the Persons, to the forgetting or lowering of the work of the other two. The temptation of the Greek Church is to worship God under the personality of the FATHER, and to regard the SON as an instrument only in the economy of redemption; whilst the Roman, laying hold of the truth that the SON is LORD, has exalted Him in His acting and ministry above the FATHER, and has thereby virtually denied the procession of the HOLY GHOST. The leaning of the Protestant has been to exalt the influences of the HOLY GHOST, as though He wrought in the Church apart from the Ordinances of CHRIST, in which the SON is manifested and declared to be come in the flesh; and to overlook the truth, that the operations or inworkings of the FATHER, ever accompany the ministries of the SON, and the gifts of the SPIRIT, and that the Church of CHRIST is the dwelling place of the Triune JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST.

1 Cor. xii.  
4-6; 8 John  
xiv. 16-20.

Those whom the dragon prevails to cast down by his tail, are they who let go their hold of the spiritual, and fall into a fleshly or carnal state, and are consequently led into error by false interpretations and perversions of God's Word. Thus they fall from their spiritual standing in the Church of CHRIST, and walk not according to the Spirit, but according to the flesh.

The dragon is represented as *standing in the presence*

*of the woman* ; by which we understand his acting and working by his servants within the precincts of the Church, or as associated and mixed up with the true servants of the LORD in their vocation and ministry. The same working of Satan is illustrated by our LORD in the parable of the wheat and tares : for when the wheat sprung up in the Gospel field, the tares appeared also. The devil sowed tares among the wheat through the instrumentality of false Apostles and teachers, and by such will the tares be matured, and fitted for the burning, even as the wheat, under the ministry of CHRIST, will be prepared for the heavenly garner. Thus does the dragon ever stand in the presence of the woman, to destroy, if possible, the man-child as soon as it shall be born.

“ And she brought forth a man-child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron : and her child was caught up unto GOD and to His throne.” This spiritual seed, represented by the man-child, is destined of GOD to be associated with His SON in the breaking of the nations with a rod of iron. In comparing Psalm ii. with Rev. ii. 26, 27, we find that it shall be the privilege of those who overcome, as CHRIST overcame, to partake of this honour and power with Him, at His appearing and kingdom. This spiritual seed, represented under the emblem of a man-child, is evidently intended to point out this same mystery in the Church : because it is not every one, who shall attain to the honour here described ; but it shall be fulfilled in those only, who shall attain unto a meetness for it. Our LORD said, “ He that is perfect shall be as his Master.” And when we reflect upon the words of S. Paul, that he accounted not himself to have attained, nor to be already perfect, but followed after, if by any means he

Phil. iii. 11,  
12.

might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead : it would seem that this man-child symbolizes those highly favoured few, who shall attain unto this prize of their high calling of God in CHRIST JESUS, even to be of that company who shall be the first begotten from the dead, and the first fruits of them that sleep. *The child being caught up unto God and to His throne*, represents the catching up of the saints to meet the LORD in the air, spoken of by S. Paul in his Epistle to the Thessalonians. The throne, on which those who overcome, shall be accounted worthy to sit, is evidently not the throne of the FATHER, but that of the SON, even of CHRIST, of Him Who is God as well as man. For none but He who is Very and Eternal God, can be associated with the FATHER on that throne on which the LORD JESUS now sitteth. Nor is there any promise in the Holy Scriptures held out to the Church that any other than He shall ever sit upon it. The catching up of the man-child unto God and His throne, is significant therefore, of those who shall be accounted worthy to be of the first resurrection ; and is the same mystery, as is expressed in the sealed ones, who escape the great tribulation, and also in those pure and undefiled virgins who stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion, having His FATHER'S Name written upon their foreheads. These are they who shall be assessors with CHRIST in the judgment, and who with Him shall rule the nations with a rod of iron, and dash the ungodly in pieces like a potter's vessel.

“ And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there, a thousand two hundred and threescore days.” As this man-child, who is destined to rule all nations

with a rod of iron, designates the company of those who are the first fruits unto God and the Lamb, it follows, that the flight of the woman into the wilderness, to a place prepared of God for one thousand two hundred and sixty days, commences with the development of the Antichrist, who shall be revealed immediately after this event ; i.e., after the translation, as declared by S. Paul, "For the mystery of iniquity <sup>2 Thess. ii. 6-10.</sup> doth already work, only He who now letteth, will let, until He (that is, the man-child) be born (*γεννηται*), or taken out of the way ; and *then* shall that wicked be revealed, whom the LORD shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." The figure of the *wilderness* seems to be used, in relation to the position in which the Church will be placed after the taking up of the man-child, or first fruits : for as God's people Israel had no ordinance in the wilderness for sustaining natural life, such as seed time and harvest, as in a settled and fertile country, but were dependent upon God for the manna which fell daily, so the Church, when her ordinances are removed, will in like manner be dependent upon God for a supernatural supply of His spiritual subsistence ; and this, most probably, will be given them by prophetic word : represented by the wings of the eagle given to the woman.

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon: and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not ; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world : he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." During the wilderness period in which the woman, who brought forth the man-child, is fed

by the Word of God, in the place which He has prepared for her, there is war in heaven; a spiritual war takes place between the servants of God and the servants of the devil. The children of the wicked one, (who as a spirit had been previously working to destroy the man-child,) having no higher principle or hope than that which binds them to the present earth, will naturally seek under the rising power of Anti-christ, to lead the whole spiritual body to submit to his power and authority, and to receive his mark; even as aforetime, such servants of the devil have brought the Church under the power of kings: so that the example will not have been without its precedent. It appears from Daniel, that Michael was the prince of the Jewish people, and it may be asked, How is it that Michael is found warring against Satan in the Christian Church? The answer, we conceive, to this question is, that as he was the guardian angel or prince of the election of God under the Old Testament dispensation; and as the blessings of the new covenant were promised to Abraham, and to his seed through faith, so now, in consequence of the natural seed having rejected Abraham's blessing, and the children of faith who are of His seed, that is of CHRIST, having become the heirs of these promises, the guardianship of the Church naturally devolves upon Michael: for the Church of CHRIST, we are assured, is under the guardianship of angels, as S. Paul testifies, saying, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto them who are heirs of salvation?" And we have several examples of the ministering and superintending care of angels, in the New Testament. They ministered to our LORD in the wilderness, to S. Peter in prison, and to Cornelius in his house.

That the war in heaven, in which Michael takes a

Dan. xii. 1.

Gal. iii.

Heb. i.



part with the servants of the LORD against Satan, is a spiritual mystery of evil, appears from the dragon being called the old *serpent*, and the *devil*, and *Satan*. As the *serpent* deceived Eve through his subtilty, so he has deceived men in the Christian Church, in all ages, by turning them away from the commandments of God. As the *devil*, he is the destroyer of everything that is good ; and that which he cannot destroy, he will, if possible, pervert. As *Satan* also, he accuses men before God, as in the case of the LORD's servant Job.

It is probably at this time that the tares are gathered into bundles for the burning ; that is, the children of the wicked one are separated from the children of God ; or in the words of this prophecy, Satan and his angel-leaders are cast out of the Church.

“ And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His CHRIST, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony ; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” The admixture of evil in the Church is the source of its weakness ; but being purged and cleansed from all wickedness, she will know the salvation for which she has waited, and the strength of the ALMIGHTY ; and the kingdom of God will appear, and the power of His CHRIST be manifested, and the accuser of the brethren will be cast down, which accused them before God day and night. The true witnesses who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of JESUS, will resist unto the death,

striving against sin, and they will overcome the spiritual seductions of the old serpent, by the word of their testimony, out of a pure conscience, through the power of the blood of CHRIST; and they will, doubtless, be stimulated in their zeal, and strengthened in their purpose, by the knowledge that they have already lost one prize, inasmuch as they attained not unto the translation of the first-fruits, and are left behind to endure the tribulation, out of which they can only hope to escape by a faithful testimony.

“Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” The servants of God will be filled with joy when they behold the accuser of the brethren cast out. But while the heavens rejoice, there will be woe pronounced on the earth, because, this being the preliminary act to the judgment and destruction of the wicked, the devil will have no further hope left, except in possessing himself of, and entering into those, who have been, and still continue, his willing servants, that in them he may exert all his power and wrath, knowing he hath but a short time.

“And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness; into her place, where she is nourished for a time and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.” After Satan is cast out of heaven; that is, after the wicked one is cast out of the Church in which he wrought, we are told, that she has a further deliverance, and time given her of God to be preserved

from the power of the serpent ; (for the Church is still identified in the remnant which is left,) and it would seem from the symbolism here used, that this deliverance will be by the instrumentality of some great prophet, whom the LORD will raise up among His persecuted and afflicted people, to defend and guard them, after the example of Moses in the wilderness ; which instrumentality appears to be symbolized by the two wings of a great eagle ; even as the LORD said of His people Israel under Moses, “I have borne you Exod. xix. 4. upon eagles’ wings,” expressing thereby, the guidance which He vouchsafed to Israel through His servant Moses, who is called a prophet, eagles’ wings being a symbol of the prophetic ministry. *The time, times, and half a time*, which are here given to the last period of the Church’s history, previous to the kingdom, are mentioned only in two other places in the Holy Scriptures, where, viewed in connection with the context, they appear to confirm our view of the period in the prophecy before us, viz., that it is the time when “that wicked” shall reign, having previously attained unto the height of his dominion during the one thousand two hundred and sixty days, when all things shall be under his power and rule, and when he, “as God, shall sit in the temple of God, showing 2 Thess. ii. 4. himself that he is God.” In the prophecy of Daniel, this period is assigned to the dominion of the little horn, (which rises up among the ten kingdoms, and which is evidently a symbol fulfilled in the last or personal Antichrist, this mystery being only shadowed forth in the Papacy,) into whose hand, it is said, the saints are “given for a time, times, and the dividing of time,” or until the judgment sits upon him ; it being intimated thereby, that the saints are then delivered

Dan. vii.  
25—27.

Dan. vii.

out of his power, and that the time is come when they shall possess the kingdom. So also the same time is mentioned as terminating the period when Antichrist shall have power to scatter the holy people, and when all these things shall be finished. In all which three places it is evident, that this mystical numbering embraces the last time, when Antichrist shall be in the plenitude and height of his power.

Dan. xii. 7.

“And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.”

We must not confound this symbol of water as a flood coming out of the mouth of the serpent, with what is apparently a similar expression in chapter xvii. 15, where waters are interpreted to mean peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues: for water is not used here in the plural, as above, but in the singular number, and should also be interpreted according to the character of the vision. The dragon is Satan, and not any embodiment of him in a civil or ecclesiastical Body, but simply a Spirit, working through men as his agents. Water is used both by our LORD and His Apostles, as an emblem of the Word of God, or the teaching of the Church. On one occasion our LORD taught His disciples, by a very expressive and symbolic act, how they were to follow Him by walking in the truth, keeping His commandment, even as He had

S. John xiii.  
4, 5.

kept His FATHER'S commandment: For “having laid aside His garments, He took a towel and girded Himself, and poured water into a bason, and began to wash His disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded;” and during His teaching

on this occasion, He adopted the symbol of water, to illustrate the power and efficacy of the word of His ministry, saying, "Now ye are clean *through the Word* which I have spoken unto you." In like manner S. Paul uses the symbol of water for that of teaching, as in the expression, of "washing of water by the word." It is, therefore, in perfect analogy and keeping with the use of this symbol by our LORD and His Apostles, to interpret the water coming as a flood out of the mouth of the serpent, as symbolic of "*the doctrine of devils*," and perversions of God's truth, which he shall pour forth; and this symbol strikingly illustrates the heretical and blasphemous teaching of Satan by the ministry of the false prophet, who shall be in union with the last Antichristian beast; Satan's object in this last desperate effort, being to carry away the woman by the false doctrines which proceed from him: but he is unsuccessful: for "the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood. The earth is here put in contradistinction to heaven, and represents those who are of the earth, and who mind earthly things; and the Church is here said to be helped by those who drink in with greediness the false teaching and hellish doctrines which Satan will then pour forth; for thereby will she be able to distinguish the more clearly between the true and the false, and so escape unpolluted. Therefore it is said—

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and the testimony of JESUS CHRIST." The seed of the woman which remain on the earth during the reign of Antichrist, will be persecuted, and sore oppressed unto the last. And her

seed being mentioned as a *remnant*, shows that it is the last remaining portion of God's people, and Satan's last effort to destroy them.

We learn, then, from the symbolism of this chapter, and from its details, that the vision is of a *spiritual* character; and that the dragon is a representation of Antichrist in a spiritual form, as warring against the Church of CHRIST.

We now proceed to consider—

### THE SECOND OR CIVIL FORM OF EVIL.

Rev. xiii. 1—  
10.

1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death: and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast,

4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who *is* like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months.

6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His Name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

9 If any man have an ear let him hear.

10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he

that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

In this vision the Apostle beheld a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and ten crowns upon his horns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. The beast is described as having the mouth of a lion, the feet of a bear, and body of a leopard. In turning to Daniel vii., where the vision of the four beasts is given which describe the four empires, of which the last is the Roman, this beast which rises up out of the sea appears to be identical with the fourth, and yet in part made up of the other three. The interpretation given of these beasts by the angel, shows clearly, that they relate to kingdoms, and therefore are of a *civil* character, being emblematical of the four great empires, which should oppress the Jewish people, before the coming of CHRIST. Therefore we conclude, that the beast which S. John saw, must of necessity be viewed under a *civil* aspect, as distinct from any other.

The four beasts in Daniel's vision, as well as that of S. John's, are said to rise up out of the *sea*. The sea, we know, is a symbol of the great mass of the people, constituted under a kingdom, or empire; and out of which source, all civil governments arise. For, although the powers that be are ordained of God, yet these *powers* arise out of, and are for the rule and government of the *people*, whilst Satan ever seeks to pervert and turn the truth of God into a lie, by asserting that the people alone are the source of power.

The symbolism of this beast, being taken from the symbols which characterize the four beasts of Daniel; that is, in its being likened unto a *leopard*, with the

mouth of a *lion*, and the feet of a *bear*, clearly shows that it refers to the three preceding beasts. And its head having ten horns, identifies it also with the fourth; and thus reveals to us, that the last, or Roman empire, has rule over, and embraces (in part at least) the territorial limits of the three former. There are also other points of identity between this beast of S. John, and the fourth beast of Daniel, which latter evidently embraces the Roman earth. In the beast of Daniel we have a power represented under the symbol of a little horn, "with a mouth speaking great things," and the mouth given to S. John's beast is described almost in the same words,—“And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.” It is also said of the beast in Daniel's vision, that “he made war with the saints and prevailed against them;” and it is also written of the beast in S. John's vision, that “It was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.” The symbolic periods of “time, times, and half a time,” and “forty and two months,” we shall also see in the sequel represent the same duration of both, and so far confirm the parallelism or identity of the two.

The fourth beast of Daniel carries us down to the final judgment upon the quick, and to the appearing of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven to reign upon the earth. And believing it to be indisputable, that this beast is identical in its mystery with the beast of S. John, the inference is, that this beast also continues until the time of the end; and indeed, this may be inferred from the tenth verse of this chapter, where it is written, “he that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and faith



of the saints.” Hence in chapter xix. he is represented as being taken and slain at the coming of the LORD with His faithful ones, when He taketh vengeance on the apostate nations.

Another argument, whereby it may be shown that this beast represents a *civil* aspect is, its having reference to an outward condition of things. For the words of numbering used to measure the duration of its power are the same which are used to express the period during which “the outer court is given unto the Gentiles to be trodden under foot.” “*The outer court*,” represents those who attain not unto perfection, through unbelief and forgetfulness of their high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS; and therefore it is not measured. But “*the temple*,” is a figure of the election of GOD, in Whom the HOLY GHOST dwelleth, and who are known only to Him. For while as a general designation of the Church, we look upon all baptized men as members of it, and though we are not called to judge any man as to his real state and character before GOD, (which prerogative belongs only unto the SON, and remains to be exercised by Him when all the baptized shall stand before His judgment-seat,) yet we know from the words of S. Paul, that “all are not Israel who are of Israel,” and that he is not a true Christian who is one outwardly, but who is one inwardly and who worships GOD in the Spirit. All the “tribes, and tongues, peoples, and nations” of the baptized, are Christians by *profession*; that is, of the outer court, though they are not all of the temple in which GOD dwelleth. Rev. xi. 2.

The method adopted for numbering the time of the beast, from the period when it is said, “the mouth is given him, being forty and two months,” whether we

regard it as literal or symbolic as to its duration, enables us also to interpret the more mystical number of Daniel's "time, times, and half a time." For if the mystery of the two beasts is the same, it follows in course, that the period of their duration must coincide; and this indeed, affords confirmation to the generally received opinion, that this is only another mode of expressing the same time.

Dan. vii. 25.

The interpretation given us of the seven heads, and ten horns, in chapter xvii. 9, 10, is also another indication or proof, that the mystery of this beast is of a civil or *political* character. We are there told, that his heads represent seven kings; or seven forms of government, five of which had fallen, one was then in being at the time the vision was given to S. John, and the other had not yet come. And we have notice also of another, which, though called the eighth, is said to be of the seven; and which appears to be expressed by the reviving of one of the heads after it had been wounded to death; and so representing, as it were, the resurrection of a form of government that had passed away. "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast."

"The dragon gave him his power, and his seat (or throne) and great authority." The beast derives his power from Satan. As he prevailed in heaven, (that is in the Church of CHRIST,) to cast down many of the stars, or ministers who were ordained, and set for a blessing in their spiritual calling, so he prevails among the nations, to use the powers that are ordained of God, for civil purposes, to suit his own designs. This power which Satan exercises is more than could be conceived, were we not expressly told, that "the whole

1 S. John v.  
19

world lieth in the wicked one," and that "he is the Prince of this age"—"the god of this world." Hence, when he tempted our LORD by "showing Him all the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them," he said unto Him—"All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them, for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If Thou, therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be Thine." Our LORD resisted the devil and rebuked him, but did not contradict his assertion. And He subsequently testified before Pilate, that "His kingdom was not of this world."

S. John xiv.  
30.  
2 Cor. iv. 4.

S. Matt. iv.  
8.

S. John xviii.  
36.

They are but little acquainted with the Spirit of CHRIST, or informed as to the general character and exercise of civil governments, who do not recognize in them the working of Satan; although it is perfectly true, at the same time, that the powers or offices which they exercise are of GOD, and, therefore to be obeyed for conscience' sake, even as when our LORD commanded concerning the Scribes and Pharisees, because they sat in Moses' seat, "Whatsoever they say unto you, do," although He charged them at the same time, not to follow their example.

Vide S.  
Matt. xxiii.  
1, 2.

This beast having also a "*seat or throne*" given to him of Satan, is another indication that its mystery is of a geographic, and political character; and we learn from an undoubted authority in the Epistle to Pergamos that "Satan had his seat there." History also informs us that Attalus, king of Pergamos, left his dominions by will to the Roman power, one hundred and thirty-three years before CHRIST: thus fulfilling to the letter this part of its history: for who can doubt that he was moved by Satan to make the gift? And we are not only told in this vision, that Satan gives the beast his power, and seat, and authority, but

that they are both idolized by the world !—" And all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast. And they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast ? Who is able to make war with him ?" As Satan had the audacity to tempt the LORD JESUS to worship him, so does he tempt the nations of Christendom, to regard him as their god ; and he succeeds in seducing them to the most fearful acts of idolatry ; he is " that spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience," and in the governments of the earth ; and the power which is from beneath gains the applause and adoration of the world, whilst the power which is from above—the God in Whom their breath is, and in Whom they live and move, and have their being—they acknowledge not, nor worship.

" And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies ; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months." We may further remark, in regard to the mystical number, "*of times, time, and half a time,*" and "*forty and two months,*" that these periods can only refer to some particular and special acting of this power against the saints ; for in either case, neither of these periods would measure the duration of this Antichristian working. And granting that these two beasts (of Daniel and S. John to which we have already referred,) are identical in their mystery ; that is, that they represent the fourth or Roman Empire, it is not true that in any portion of its past history answering to this period, the saints have altogether been given into its hand, or that it has prevailed wholly against them. Besides, we are told in respect to the number in Daniel vii. 25, that it applies only to the time when the little horn or king, which afterward came up

among the other ten, (and which is descriptive of the last personal Antichrist,) makes war with the saints and prevails against them. We are also told in the vision of S. John, that the forty and two months measure the time when authority was given him to make war against the saints, and to overcome them. We may also observe, that the *mouth* mentioned in Daniel vii. 8 and 20, as speaking great things, and the *mouth* in verse five of this chapter, as speaking great and blasphemous things, must be distinguished from either beast as a *whole*. For the mouth in the little horn could not be the mouth of the beast; and the mouth which S. John saw in this vision, is mentioned as a thing *pecially given to him*, and does not appear identical with the “mouth of the lion:” or at least the peculiarity of the expression “*given*,” must relate to some special period in its history, and cannot be applicable to its whole duration.

The next form of evil presented to our notice in this vision is—

### THE THIRD, OR ECCLESIASTICAL FORM OF EVIL.

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. Rev. xiii. 11—14.

12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

As the first beast describes the mystery of Antichrist in a political character, so the second beast has the

characteristic features of Antichrist under an ecclesiastical character. The mystery of iniquity here portrayed, is that of Satan, working in the ecclesiastical polity of the Church. The proofs of this appear to be these : Firstly, he has two horns like a lamb ; Secondly, he worketh miracles ; and Thirdly, he causes fire to come down from heaven in the sight of men. All these signs, by referring to the Scriptures, will be found to be of an ecclesiastical character, and to pertain to the Church. The lamb offered by Abel, when he brought of the firstlings of his flock, and subsequently by the priests on the Jewish altar, was typical of the sacrifice of CHRIST, whom John the Baptist pointed out to all Israel, as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. And it is written of Him, that “He was anointed with the HOLY GHOST, and with *power*.” So also in this book He is represented in the midst of the throne as a *Lamb slain*. The LORD JESUS also gave Ordinances in His Church, as a means whereby to carry on His work of grace and salvation among men. And He spake to His disciples of a *twofold* power which should be exercised in His Church, in order to testify of Him, saying, “Ye shall receive *power*, after that the HOLY GHOST is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto ME, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” And again, “When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the FATHER, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the FATHER, *He* shall testify of Me ; and *ye also* shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning.” Of this twofold power, S. Paul speaks in his Epistle to the Thessalonians, “For our Gospel came not unto you in

Acts x. 38.

Acts i. 8.

S. John xv.  
26, 27.

1 Thess. i. 5.

word only, but also in power, and in the HOLY GHOST."

S. Peter also says, "We are witnesses of these things

Acts v. 32.

and so also is the HOLY GHOST." The "*horn*" is a

Deut. xxxiii.

17; Psalm

cxxxii. 37;

Dan. viii.

3, 5, 6.

symbol of *power*, and these are the two manifested powers of CHRIST in His Church; the *man*, and the

HOLY GHOST; that is, the witness of regenerate men

to the truth as it is in JESUS, accompanied with the

witness of the HOLY GHOST. Now, the two horns of

the beast, are not said to be those of a lamb, but two

horns like a lamb, showing that the powers here sym-

bolized, are an imitation of the powers of CHRIST,

which He left in the Church, and therefore, that this

beast having assumed these powers, is of an eccle-

siastical character. In addition to the description here

given of these powers which the beast assumes, we are

told that their origin is *from the earth*. And if it be

Eph. iv.

true that CHRIST gave Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists,

Pastors and Teachers, as the standing ordinances of

that heavenly constitution which He ordained for the

perfecting of the saints, it is equally certain, that any

other constitution or polity is not of the heavenly, but

must be of the earthly, whether it be under patriarchs,

popes, synods, or kings; and must be designated in

symbolic language, as a *beast*; because a beast is used

to symbolize an earthly, and not a heavenly constitu-

tion. For as CHRIST cannot but be true to His own

ordinances, so He cannot commit His power to those

that are not of Him; that is to say, if Apostles are

His ordinance of rule in the Church, we have no right

to say He will exercise His rule through any other

channel; if prophets are His ordinance for bringing

light into His Church, the light brought into it by any

other source which sets this ordinance aside, will not

commend itself as of Him; and so of any other ordi-

nance of CHRIST. If we admit not this truth, we invalidate the constitution of the Church of CHRIST, and in effect say, that what He gave was merely temporary, and intended only to subsist for a very short time ; which propositions we do not believe. And however fearful it may seem to attribute to the outward polity of the Church an inspiration of Satanic agency, yet if this be its symbol, it is here declared that its voice is the voice as of a *dragon* ; that is, it speaks as the devil. And so it must be : for if CHRIST has not been speaking, who else can have been speaking but *he* ? It should be remembered, however, that we are here speaking *only* of the outward form or constitution of the Church, as having fallen from its spiritual standing into a fleshly and earthly one, and as having substituted ordinances of man, for the ordinances of CHRIST. Doubtless the seed of God has been in it from the beginning ; and there were, we doubt not, many true Christian men, when they of Asia turned away from S. Paul, and rejected him ; and so also there were good and holy men in the Church to whom the Apostle John wrote, when he said of “ Diotrephes, he receiveth us not, and casteth out those that would.” But it is equally true that the leaders of these Churches were not servants of CHRIST, but of Satan, and consequently their substitution of another order of things, whatever it was, must have been after the character of their own spirit and mind—of the earth ; and its voice the voice of the dragon ; and thus it has been from that time until now. For although in the providence of God, many righteous and holy men have been seen in the high places of its Hierarchy, yet through the apostacy of the Church, and its departure from the true constitution which CHRIST gave it, they have been the



ministers of a polity not given of CHRIST, unwittingly it may be, and not through their own personal fault, but from the fallen condition, and spiritual captivity of the baptized, as a people.

Another characteristic of this beast which came up out of the earth is, that “he exerciseth all the power of the first beast in his presence,” (*ἐνὶ ὄψει αὐτοῦ.*) Now, if the first beast be Satan working in the civil power, there has been clearly no other power in Christendom, or indeed could be, save the ecclesiastical, of which this can be affirmed; and no one will need to have it proved, that the Church, especially that branch of it called the Church of *Rome*, has used the civil power, to execute its decrees and censures; and that also, as it is here said, in the *presence* of the beast. And so Church and State have come to be regarded as two forms of the same thing, and for the same end; that is, to enable those in authority, to exercise the ruling power to their own advantage instead of using that power to the honour and glory of God, and for the good of His people. And so power has been abused, the poor and the weak oppressed, not protected; and this has brought in its opposite evil, all rule and authority being despised, and set at naught, and democracy and chartism deluging the land.

The abuse also, which has been made of the Church's authority, is here declared, as causing the earth and them that dwell therein, to worship the civil power, represented by the first beast. For being under the patronage and protection of the State, both the Church and its rulers, seeking the praise of men rather than the praise of God, men must naturally reverence and be subject to that which affords them defence and support. Not indeed rendering obedience

Rom. xiii.

in the spirit of S. Paul, who commands us to be subject to every ordinance of man for conscience' sake, and as ordained of God for the restraining of wickedness, and for the praise of them that do well ; but as a system or polity, in which self-interest, and self-exaltation, are the manifest motives. The duty of those who exercise power in the Church, is not only to rule in the fear of the LORD, and as the servants of men for CHRIST's sake, but also to lead those over whom they rule, to worship God in spirit and in truth. And any system or polity which has not this for its object and end, is not ruling for CHRIST, nor in the Spirit of CHRIST ; but is moved in the exercise of its power, by the spirit of the world ; a spirit of selfishness and private ambition in those who rule, who would fix upon themselves that regard and worship, which is due unto God alone. For while it is true, that Christian men are called upon to honour the king, and all that are put in authority under him, and to be obedient and faithful in their respective places, any man, or any system of man, which would usurp and claim that worship which is due to God only, is evidently moved by the devil, who tempted our LORD Himself to fall down and worship him !

Another characteristic of this beast which came up out of the earth, as representing the Church in its outward or ecclesiastical polity is, that " he hath power to work miracles." And this, it appears to us, can only be explained upon the principle, that although men have cast off and rejected the true ordinances of CHRIST, and have given themselves up to a system which is of man's invention, into which they have been beguiled by the subtilty of Satan, yet CHRIST, Who is " the faithful and true Witness," and who has ever had

a faithful and true seed, albeit in the midst of an apostate state and condition, has never forsaken His Church; but has been present in those sacraments and ordinances which have remained. “Where two or three have met together in His Name, He has been in the midst of them,” as He promised, and as He also said in another place, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age.” And although wicked men have taken upon themselves the administration of the Sacraments and orders of the Church, yet to the faithful these sacraments and orders have had in them the presence of CHRIST; for otherwise there would have been no Church upon the earth. The “*fire from heaven*,”—that is, in the symbolic language of the vision, the HOLY GHOST, has descended upon faithful men, so that signs and wonders have been wrought, and these men who have witnessed them, and experienced the power of God working in their own hearts, have been deceived into the belief, that because CHRIST had not forsaken them, they had not forsaken Him. And thus Satan has had in many cases, the direction of the power which was of God; even as he sought to direct the power of the HOLY GHOST in our LORD, when He was driven into the wilderness to be tempted by him; desiring CHRIST to use His power at his bidding, and not under the direction of His heavenly FATHER.

S. Matt.  
xviii. 20.S. Matt.  
xxviii. 20.

Closely allied with this is—

#### THE FOURTH, OR SUPERNATURAL FORM OF EVIL.

14 Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword and did live.

Rev. xiii.  
14—18.

15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast,

that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

16 And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads :

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast : for it is the number of a man : and his number is Six hundred threescore *and* six.

The fourth form of iniquity is described under the *Image* of the first beast, which is made at the instigation of the second ; “ saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an Image to the beast, which had the wound by the sword and did live.” Here we have revealed, the ultimate action of the apostate Church in bringing out through its agency this mystery of iniquity ; the last, and most fearful form of Antichrist, and emphatically designated THE IMAGE of the beast. In order to understand the symbolic imagery here used, we must have recourse to the Scriptures for its interpretation : for as we have before observed, no interpretation which cannot bear this test is a true one, however plausible, or ingenious it may be. An *Image*, is a representation of a person, or thing ; and it was a common thing to set up an image as a representation of God, for the people to worship. Thus Jeroboam set up the image of Baal, and Manasseh set carved images in the house of God. And Nebuchadnezzar the king set up an image of gold in the plains of Dura, in the province of Babylon, that all people, nations, and tongues should fall down and worship it. But though every nation formed their image after their ideas of God, we have no instance given us in the Scriptures of their idolatrous images

Vide 1 Kings

xi.

2 Chron.

xxxiii. 7.

Dan. iii. 1.

*speaking* and living, although their priests would often impose such a falsehood upon the people, causing them to believe a lie, as in the case of Dagon, and in the Heathen oracles, which were frequently spoken through the images of the idols. God, however, had determined from the beginning, that there should be a true image or likeness of Himself which should speak and live. And the foreshadowing of this was revealed in "the first Adam," but who was only a type of "the Second Adam;" that is of JESUS CHRIST, in Whom this great purpose is consummated. He said to His disciples, "he that hath seen ME hath seen the FATHER. . . . The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself, but the FATHER Which dwelleth in ME, He doeth the works." The only example, therefore of an image speaking and living, is found in the person of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; and this will give us some idea of this mystery of iniquity; because this antichristian power is Satan's imitation of, and substitution for CHRIST and His kingdom. When God formed man, it is said, "He formed him in His own image after His own likeness." But God did not live in or speak through Adam, or any of his posterity, until CHRIST came; of Whom it is said, He is "THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD." S. John xiv. 10. He is the brightness of the FATHER's glory, and "the express Image of His person." Col. i. 15. And he was the first image, and likeness of God, in Whom God did *speak and live*. Heb. i. 3. He was a living Image; and in and through those who are united to Him, God lives, and speaks; and they, with CHRIST their Head, constitute one body; as God as said, "I will dwell in them and walk in them."

Of the *Image* of the beast it is said, the second

beast caused him to *live*, and to *speak*. Now, as an image is the representation of the person or thing, after which it is modelled, so this image of the beast must be a reconstitution of that form and extent of political power which the first beast exercised. But although it is a reconstitution in all its integral parts, it is not described as living after that form or mode of existence in which the beast of which it is the image existed ; but as having an energy or life of Satan communicated through the instrumentality and power of the Second, or ecclesiastical beast, showing that the apostate Church shall be the prominent agent in stirring up the men who live upon the earth, to reconstitute this empire. And by the phrase, *them that dwell upon the earth*, we infer, they are the apostate men who have renounced that life which they ought to live, as risen with CHRIST, and seated with Him in the heavenlies. For this expression, “upon the earth,” relates not only to their local habitation, but to their spiritual condition, as being of the earth earthy, and not spiritually minded. The Church is not this empire ; but it moves its members to constitute it ; and when constituted, Satan in the apostate Church fills it with his spirit, so that its life and action will be Satanic ; and thus will the last Antichrist be revealed. For as CHRIST and His Church are indwelt by the HOLY GHOST, and GOD dwelleth in them and speaketh by them : so in a manner analogous to this, will be the antichristian form, with its eighth head, though of the seven indwelt of Satan. It should be remembered however, that this indwelling does not mean incarnation. There is only One incarnate, and that Incarnate One is the SON of GOD—the Man CHRIST JESUS. And we are not the sons of GOD by incarnation, but by re-

generation. We are partakers of the Divine nature only in virtue of our *union* with CHRIST, as members of His Body. God liveth in and speaketh by His creature man, through the indwelling of the HOLY GHOST. That corporate body which Satan will inhabit and fill with *his* life and power, will be the *counterfeit* of this, having the semblance and appearance of unity, but not the reality : for he is not able to dwell personally in all the men who shall confederate together with him, although he can possess himself of all, at one and the same time, through the agency of devils. And in this way will the *Image* of the beast be indwelt and energized of the devil, and exercise his power both in speaking and acting.

It is certain also, that the form of government to be assumed is the *Imperial*. We arrive at this conclusion, not from the description given of the image alone, but from parallel passages of Scripture concerning the last mystery of iniquity. His actings are spoken of in Daniel xi. under the name of "the vile person," Dan. vii. 25. and "the king who shall do according to his will," and into whose hands the saints shall be given for a time, and times, and the dividing of time. And this wilful and powerful king is the same as S. Paul emphatically describes under the name of "*That wicked*" 2 Thess. ii. 8 whom the LORD shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming ; even him, whose coming is according to the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." —10. In Rev. xvii. we are told that he shall arise out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition. And finally, it is written in the chapter we are considering, that the *Image* is that of the beast which had the wound by a

sword, and did live, and one of whose heads was wounded to death. This circumstance especially points us to the *Imperial* form of government. For of all the seven forms of government, by which Rome has been governed, the Imperial is that, of which it may be truly said that it was destroyed by the sword; and of which we learn from the prophecy of this chapter connected with that of chap. xvii. that it is to be revived again in the *eighth* head, *not* as a new form, but as one of "*the seven*" revived; and so called the eighth, because of its reviving again after the seventh.

The *second* beast also gave power unto the *Image* of the first beast, to cause as many as would not worship the Image of the beast to be killed. This persecuting power which the beast exercises, identifies him with the beast of the eleventh chapter; where it is written, that "When the two witnesses shall have finished their testimony, the beast which rises up out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them."

"And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads, that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." The *mark* distinguishes those that receive it as belonging to the beast: for it is the mark of the beast, and not the mark of the image which they receive. These marks also have their interpretation, and are significant of the state of mind, or spiritual condition of those that receive them. The mark received in the *forehead*, represents them to be of the character and spirit of the beast; while the mark received on *the hand* shows that they are one with him in his operation and work—of



his train—fellow-workers, and helpers together with him. The difference of character between the servants of CHRIST, and those of the beast is broadly drawn in chapter xiv. For the 144,000 which stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion, have His FATHER'S Name written on their foreheads. The Name of the FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, being that of love, His servants stand in striking contrast with these of the beast, his mark being characteristic of the very opposite of that Spirit of purity and love in which the servants of CHRIST live and move. And as the mark on the forehead, in contrast with the Name of the FATHER, exhibits the spirit of Satan as opposed to the Spirit of God: so the mark in the hand distinguishes the working or acts of the beast from those of the Lamb. The servants of CHRIST are described by S. Paul as fellow-workers with Him and doing the Will of God; in opposition to which the followers of the beast are seen doing the works of Satan. And as they are now opposed to each other in heart and life, so will they also Rev. xix. be manifestly opposed to each other, in that day, when the LORD shall come out of heaven, with His faithful ones, to contend face to face, and hand to hand, with the beast and his army.

The prohibition to buy or sell, appears to be the penalty of those who have not the mark on the forehead or on the hand, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name; and death the penalty of those only, who would not worship the image of the beast, or last form of antichristian power. These iniquitous proceedings, which appear to be “framed by a law,” Ps. xciv. deserve particular attention; for as this last form of Antichrist is intimately connected with the first and second beast, both in its character and spirit, from the

beginning of the dispensation, we are hereby taught that this last penalty is the climax of all that Satan can do in persecuting the children of God who refuse to conform to the established religion of the revived empire, or to worship the beast and his image.

The *name* of the beast evidently contains a great mystery of iniquity ; and appears to relate to the personal Antichrist, as the head of a corporate or organized body ; and the *receiving* of the name may involve a formal or outward act, expressive of a real initiation into that body, and also of spiritual power imparted thereby, to those who are united to that community. Like as we who are baptized into the *name of CHRIST*, receive of His power, and partake of His Spirit ; so these who receive the name of the beast, are one with him in spirit and in power, and have communion with devils, being filled with evil spirits. Such, we believe, will be the body of Antichrist, as opposed to the body of *CHRIST* ; and surely it is not unreasonable to suppose, that his character and manifested existence should be implied in his *name*.

The *number* is a deeper mystery still, and refers not only to the outward manifestation, but to the source and limitation, of his power. For it is here called, first, "the number of his name ;" secondly, "the number of the beast ;" and thirdly, "the number of a man." This threefold designation of the beast, describes, first, his *locality* ; (which we know, from the prophecy of this book, to be that of Rome, as a centre,) or the place of his seat or throne. In this first view or aspect, the word *Lateinos* appears to contain the mystery of the number. And such was the opinion of Irenæus in the second century. "The name *Lateinos*, (he says) has the number 666 ; and is

Vide Irenæ.  
Lib. V. Cap.  
xxx. p. 449  
Edit. Grabe,  
Oxon.

very much like, since the last kingdom has this number. For they are Latins who now reign."

It is also said to be "the number of the *beast*." Now, we have already shown, that the beast of S. John is the same as the last beast of the prophet Daniel, which is the Roman Empire; that is, Christendom in its political aspect, having Rome for its seat of power. And it is remarkable that from the year B.C. 133, when Attila, king of Pergamos, gave his dominions by will to the Roman power, until Justinian decreed that the Bishop of Rome should be supreme and ultimate judge of appeal in all ecclesiastical matters in the year of CHRIST 533, is exactly 666 years.

It is also said to be "the number of a MAN;" in which third point of view, we are taught that the mystery of the Antichrist involves the mystery of human working; and that all the endowments of man in his threefold constitution of body, soul and spirit; and his noble faculties of will, word, and power; will be actively used in the mysterious working, and doings of that wicked one, shortly to be revealed, who will exhibit all the perfections of the natural man, yet used by, and for Satan: and in this way will deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. For though this work of Antichrist will have the semblance of the truth, yet the elect of God will discern not only his perversions, but his denial of it, and so be preserved from his delusions. We learn from the Scriptures, that *six* is the number of human or natural perfection, and that seven always relates to CHRIST or spiritual perfection as revealed in Him. Thus for example, the time allotted for man's work is six days, and the seventh is God's day, or Sabbath of rest. As it is written, "Six days shalt thou work, and do all that thou hast to do; but the

seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God." As six in its symbolic meaning represents human perfection, so seven is the symbol which represents the mystery of CHRIST—of Him Who hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; that is—the perfect manifestation of Him in the Church. And three sevens are significant of God's great purpose to perfect His saints after the image of CHRIST, in body, soul, and spirit. In like manner three sixes represent the mystery of human perfection of body, soul, and spirit, unaided and unassisted by the Spirit of God. In other words, Antichrist will seek to perfect the physical, mental, and spiritual parts of man's being; so that, instead of acknowledging "the mystery of God, and of the FATHER, and of CHRIST, in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," to whom the physical, mental, and spiritual powers of man appertain, and by whose aid alone they can be rightly used and perfected, he will have his whole being energized by Satan, and cause himself to be worshipped as God; yea, he will assert that there is no other God but man, and will set himself in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God!

The only additional reason, that we shall at present adduce, for believing that these four forms of evil have the interpretation which we have given them is, that they are represented as *synchronising with each other, or as being in exercise at one and the same time*. We read, for instance, in the fourth verse of this chapter, "and they worshipped the *dragon* which gave power unto the *beast*; and they worshipped the *beast*; saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him," showing evidently that these two forms of worship go on together, or are present at one and

the same time. Again, in the twelfth verse it is said of the *second* beast, that he exerciseth all the power of the *first* beast before him; that is, *in his presence* (ἐνώπιον), which shows that the second beast is also in existence together with the first, and consequently must be parallel with the dragon form of worship. And again, in the fifteenth verse, the second beast is said to give life to the *Image* of the beast, that the Image of the beast should both speak and cause that as many as would not worship the Image of the beast should be killed; consequently the worshipping of the Image of the beast is contemporaneous or parallel with the existence of him who causes the worship; and who himself, as we have seen, exercises all the power of the *first* beast in his presence; and who also is worshipped in connexion with the *dragon*. From what is here stated concerning *these four forms of evil*, it is sufficiently evident, that they must all be contemporaneous with each other, although distinct in their character; leaving no doubt upon our minds that they are descriptive of the working of Antichrist, under the fourfold phase of prophecy, given us in the Epistles, Seals, Trumpets, and Vials.

The consummation of these things both of good and evil, is given us in the following chapter.

#### CONSUMMATION OF THE APOSTACY, &c.

1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, Rev. xiv.  
and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having His FATHER'S Name written in their foreheads.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn

that song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, *being* the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand;

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

12 Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat like unto the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.

15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for Thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

16 And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire: and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs.

This chapter is a continuation of the preceding, and brings us down to the consummation of the Apostacy, and the revelation of the personal Antichrist. The prophecy also gives a vivid description of the triumph of CHRIST and His Church over all the powers of the enemy, commencing with the translation of His people, who have loved His appearing, and waited for His salvation. It opens thus:

“And I looked, and lo a lamb stood on Mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His FATHER’S Name written in their foreheads.” The *Lamb*, as we have already seen, is an emblem of the LORD JESUS, and is so used in the fifth chapter of this book where He is seen in the midst of the throne, surrounded by the four living creatures, and the Elders; but here He is represented as standing on Mount Zion, showing us that He is risen up to avenge His elect, which cry day and night unto Him. Zion was the place where David and Solomon dwelt of old, and is typical of the dwelling place of David’s Son and LORD—the Man CHRIST JESUS; as it is written in the second Psalm, “Yet have I set my King upon my

holy hill of Zion." As it is also written in Psalm xlviii., "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King, God is well known in her palaces as a sure refuge." In like manner, S. Paul, speaking of our high and holy calling in CHRIST JESUS, says, "Ye are come unto Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." The Lamb, in this vision, is not seen standing alone on Mount Zion, but, with Him, an hundred and forty and four thousand. The same mystical number are described in chapter vii., as being sealed in their foreheads, by the seal of the living God, previous to the last act of judgment upon Babylon. And their now appearing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, shows that they have escaped the great tribulation which takes place under the personal Antichrist. They are those who have taken heed unto the Word of the LORD, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things which shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." The first designation given of them is, their "having His FATHER'S Name written in their foreheads." And we know that His Name is LOVE. As it is written, "God is love; he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

Heb. xii. 22.

S. Luke xxi.  
36.

1 S. John iv.  
16.

"And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps." This voice from heaven is none other than the voice of the LORD JESUS, which being heard through His gathered people, is as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder. The voice of the LORD is described in the vision of the first chapter, as "the



voice of many waters," and elsewhere, as "the voice of thunder." This description, as used in connexion with the elect number standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, expresses the great truth, that their voice is the voice of the LORD, being one with Him in mind and spirit, through the indwelling of the HOLY GHOST—vox Ecclesiæ—vox Dei. The Apostle also "heard the voice of *harpers* harping with their harps." The *harp* was used by David, "the sweet singer of Israel." "On the harp will I praise Thee, O God, my God." And again, "I will open my dark saying upon the harp." It is said also of "Gedaliah, and Zeri, and Jeshaiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, that they prophesied with a harp, to give thanks and to praise God." The harp, therefore, is a symbol of inspired song, even as it was used by David, and in the temple of Solomon. "The voice of harpers, harping with their harps," represents the elect number as having in them the prophetic spirit, by whose inspiration they sing the new song of victory.

"And they sung, as it were, a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the elders, and no man could learn that song, but the hundred forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth." From the interpretation which we have given of these living creatures and elders in chapter v. 6, it is evident that these inspired harpers are a company recognizing the presence of the LORD in those ordinances which He gave for the perfecting of the Church; and that it is by Apostles alone His Bride can be presented unto Him, without spot or blemish. The song which they sing is called *new*, because it celebrates an event, which, heretofore, has had no parallel upon the earth. For they commemorate a deli-

Rev. i. 15;  
Job x. 9.

Ps. xliii. 4.  
Ps. xlix. 4.

1 Chron  
xxv. 3.

1 Chron.  
xxv. 1-3.

Eph. iv.

verance, not only from the power of Antichrist, but also a victory over their last enemy, death, their bodies having been made like unto CHRIST's glorious Body, which has placed them beyond the reach of Satan and every form of evil. It is also said, that none other could learn this song but the hundred and forty and four thousand ; and the reason evidently is, because they are an elect number, and the first who have attained their complete redemption ; the first who have put on immortality, being accounted worthy to stand before the Son of Man, a dignity whereunto no other man, however much he may be fearing God, and witnessing for Him, has yet attained upon the earth, and who consequently cannot rejoice in a salvation which he has not realized. Those who sing this new song are said to be *redeemed from the earth*, in order to distinguish them from those who have not attained unto this glory. For redemption, in the full acceptance of the word, involves the resurrection from the dead, and the changing of our bodies unto the likeness of CHRIST's glorified body.

“ These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb.” Their not being defiled with women, distinguishes them from that class of professing Christians, who in the symbolic language of this book, “ commit fornication with the kings of the earth ;” that is, those who hold to, and defend the alliance which subsists between the Church and the State. The Church, at the beginning, was espoused unto One Husband, even CHRIST, and was subject unto Him in all things, acknowledging Him in His Ordinances

which He gave for her perfection. But when she "left her first love," and declined from the perfect way of the LORD, she became subject to the rulers of this world, and allied herself to them, and permitted them to exercise authority in spiritual and heavenly things, unto which they were neither called nor ordained of the LORD. This was first manifested under Constantine, and subsequently in the Papacy; nor is there any Church in Christendom, by whatever name it is called, free from this captivity. It is a most fearful description that we have here presented to us of the Church of CHRIST, which was spoken of at the beginning as a "chaste virgin," becoming, in the end of the age, as a "drunken harlot!" We have already seen that the term "*women*," in its original signification, relates to the marriage state; and the present age, being only the day of the Church's espousals, and not the time when the marriage of the Lamb is solemnized, the name of woman, as here used, represents the impure condition of those Churches which have associated themselves with the rulers of this world, instead of waiting for their LORD from heaven. The emblem of "*virgins*" represents those churches which are not so defiled, but who remain faithful to their espousals, and points to that elect number out of the baptized nations who have attained unto the mind and Spirit of CHRIST, and who are therefore pure and undefiled before God, being not of this world even as CHRIST was not of it. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth; that is, they acknowledge Him in His ordinances, enter fully into the purpose of God revealed in His Church, and run with enlarged hearts in the way of His commandments. These are redeemed from among men, being the first-

fruits unto God and the Lamb. It is a precious truth, and an article of faith to be believed, that our LORD JESUS CHRIST hath redeemed not only the Church, but all mankind. The expression therefore, "These were redeemed from among men," must have a peculiar and special meaning, and shows that they are an election which will be gathered out, and taken from among professing Christians, and received up into glory, as typified in the translation of Enoch and Elijah, while the rest of mankind remain still upon the earth. This mystical number, no doubt, includes all the elect of God from the beginning of the Christian dispensation, who answer to the description here given of them, as S. James says, "Of His own will begat He us, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures."

As there will be an election from among living men, so will there be an election from the departed. Those only who have attained unto the virgin character spoken of in this prophecy, will partake of the first resurrection. Hence S. Paul pressed forward in his Christian course, desiring above all things to know the fellowship of CHRIST's sufferings, and to be made conformable unto His death, if by any means he might attain unto "the resurrection from among the dead." (*ἐκ νεκρῶν.*)

Phil. iii. 11.

Lev. xxiii.  
and Deut.  
xvi.

"The feast of first-fruits" under the law, as recorded in Deuteronomy and Leviticus, was doubtless typical of this act of gathering out, from among the baptized, a people prepared and made ready for the LORD. The Jews were forbidden to put the sickle to the corn till the first-fruits had been waved before the LORD in the temple. And we learn that the wave sheaf of first-fruits was presented unto the LORD, before the harvest

was fully ripe, from which we infer that the Priest, or officer, who fulfilled this act, gathered not the first-fruits by the sickle, but plucked off the ripest corn with his own hand, one by one, here and there, as he passed through the fields; till, having secured a sufficient number to form a sheaf, he bound them into one, and brought them into the temple, and presented them as the first-fruits of the harvest. And as the first-fruits were gathered from the standing corn in the fields, so will it be in the antitype. "The harvest is the end of the age," and these first-fruits, described in the Revelation, precede the harvest, and are gathered from among living men. The gathering of this elect number, is the first act of judgment upon Christendom. As many as love the Lord's appearing, and have indeed waited for Him, having their loins girt, and their lamps burning; or who, like the wise virgins, are provided with oil in their vessels with their lamps, shall be taken away, or separated from those who are not prepared, or made ready.

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." This describes an act subsequent to the translation, or gathering of the first-fruits. Many who, (like the foolish virgins,) have been professedly waiting for the Lord, and who have believed the truth of the second Advent as a doctrine, but who nevertheless have failed to obtain that preparation of heart and spirit, which is essential to being admitted into His presence, will, after their brethren have been taken from them, be awakened to a sense of their loss, and be constrained to witness for the truth, and they will declare the Gospel of the kingdom to all

that dwell upon the earth, to every nation, and kindred, and tongue and people. For the knowledge which they possess of the "translation," will be to them a means of deliverance from those snares which have hitherto kept them from wholly following the LORD, and they will go forth to save others as well as themselves by their testimony :

"Saying, with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come, and worship Him that made heaven and earth, the sea, and the fountains of waters." The message which shall go forth to all that dwell upon the earth, being not only a proclamation of the everlasting Gospel, but also a call to worship Him who made heaven and earth, and the sea and the fountains of waters, reveals how very low, among every class of the baptized nations, that worship will have fallen. It would seem, that at this period, infidelity will have eaten out of the hearts and minds of men all knowledge of, and reverence for, and belief in, the One God of our salvation, and it may be, even the acknowledgment of Him as the Creator, ascribing the beautiful order and variety which are seen in the material universe to some other source or mighty power in the creature, preparatory to the worship of him, who shall arrogate unto himself all human science and knowledge, and, aided by a demon's power, seat himself in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God. The prophecy shows that this defection will become universal ; for the angelic messenger flies through the midst of heaven—the spiritual region—and proclaims the Gospel of the kingdom to all that dwell on the earth, even to those who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof ; and to every nation, and

kindred, and people, and tongue, that God's elect may be gathered from the four winds under heaven, (for there will be still a people to be gathered unto the LORD, a remnant according to the election of grace, though they be not of the first-fruits.) And they are commanded to "Fear God and to give glory to Him," and to worship Him, who has constituted and formed all things both in the Church and in the earth, for the salvation of His people. And though it be the time of judgment, it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be delivered, for in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said. The first act of judgment has taken place in the gathering and presentation of the first fruits ; and behold ! another is close at hand. For the ministry of the everlasting Gospel being fulfilled,

"There followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." These words describe the next event which follows the witness-bearing of the God-fearing remnant (who have not attained unto the translation), and it consists in the utter destruction of the apostate Churches, here signified by the name of Babylon. The same event is mentioned in Chapter xvii. where we are told that the ten kings, who receive power one hour with the beast, and who give their power and strength unto him, shall hate the whore and make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire, because God hath put it into their heart to fulfil His Will. And the judgment comes upon apostate Christendom because she made all nations drink of the wine of her fornication. That the woman, here spoken of, is the

Rev. xvii. 18. same as Babylon, is evident; for she is called "*That great city*, which reigneth over the kings of the earth," the same expression which is used in the vision we are considering, "*that great city.*" This reveals to us, that Antichrist will endeavour to blot out even the name of CHRIST from under heaven, in order to make room for the exaltation of himself into the seat of God. This is referred to in the prophecy before us, as consequent upon the destruction of the Apostate Churches; for, immediately upon this, the people are warned touching the worship of the beast and his image, and of the judgment which will come upon those who do him homage, or receive his mark.

"And the third angel followed them, saying, with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of GOD, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." Antichrist will have no sooner destroyed the constitution of every professing church, than he will seek by the aid of the false prophet to establish the worship of himself, as it is written of him in the book

Dan. xi. 36,  
37.

of Daniel; "And the king shall do according to his will, and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that which is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God



of his fathers, nor the desire of women, (i.e. of the churches,) nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all." But as there will still be a seed of God left in the earth to whom the character of this usurper will have become so manifest that they cannot remain in doubt as to who he is or what will be his final end, and as it will be impossible any longer to hide themselves from his power,—none being allowed to buy or sell, but such as have his mark in their forehead or in their hand, or his name or his number—they will be constrained to witness against him, and his worship, and to proclaim in their testimony, that they who worship him, or receive his mark, must drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which He will pour out without mixture into the cup of His indignation, and that they will be tormented with "that wicked" in the lake of fire and brimstone (into which he will be cast with the false prophet,) which was prepared for the devil and his angels. Their being tormented in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb, shows that Antichrist and his confederates are persons who have apostatized from the faith of CHRIST, whose truth they have heard by the ministry of His angels, and that they have been guilty of trampling under foot the SON of God, and of counting the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing, and of doing despite to the Spirit of grace. And their condemnation will ever be had in remembrance, and be a memorial throughout all ages: for the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever!

Vide Heb. x.  
29.

"Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of JESUS." During the reign of THE Antichrist, the

saints of God will be tried unto the uttermost, and a noble company of the faithful servants of JESUS CHRIST will bear witness unto the truth, not loving their lives unto death. The fiery trial through which *they* will have to pass who have not attained to be of the first-fruits, and who perhaps have never contemplated such a consummation of wickedness and blasphemy, will require the utmost patience and faith to endure, so that they will need to be sustained and comforted by a voice from heaven : for it is added :—

“ And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead which die in the LORD from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them.” This voice from “ heaven ” will be from “ the translated Church,” who will sympathize with their brethren in the flesh, and encourage them with the prospect of a speedy victory over all the power of the enemy, and with the hope of that glory, and reward, which are immediately to be given them. The gathering of the innumerable multitude out of the great tribulation, symbolized by the reaping of the harvest, is the next thing presented to us in this vision ;—

“ And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.” These emblems describe the LORD’s appearing with His translated saints, for the purpose of gathering and receiving unto Himself His faithful and devoted servants. The *crown* being on His head, represents Him as having already taken unto Himself His great power to reign. The *white cloud* is an emblem of that pure and undefiled company, or “ cloud of witnesses ” which was before seen standing with

the Lamb on Mount Zion, who are His assessors in the judgment, and who come with Him to execute His Will. The *sharp sickle* which is seen in His hand, represents the affliction and sorrow out of which they will be gathered: for not being of the 144,000 sealed ones, they do not escape the great tribulation, but are those who come out of it. The interest which the translated saints take in this work for which the LORD now appears, is also represented under another emblem:—

“And another angel came out of the Temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle and reap: for the time is come for Thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” This represents the voice of *Intercession* in those in whom the HOLY GHOST dwells as His temple, who cry mightily to the LORD for the deliverance of the saints who remain’ upon the earth, that as corn fully ripe, they may be gathered or delivered out of the midst of their enemies, and received into the garner of God. That their cry is the cry of the HOLY GHOST, Who maketh intercession in the saints according to the will of God, is evident: for no sooner is the cry uttered than—

“He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.” This harvest includes all God’s elect people which shall be found on the earth at the end of this dispensation. And the innumerable multitude which come out of the great tribulation occasioned by the reign of Antichrist, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, are represented in the seventh chapter, as participating in the glory of CHRIST’S kingdom, although they attain not unto that of the

first fruits, whom we shall see, in the course of this prophecy, are exalted to the dignity of being "the Bride, the Lamb's wife."

"And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle." This angel coming out of the temple in heaven *subsequent* to the reaping of the harvest, represents to us an action of the gathered church, who having been found faithful unto the LORD have attained unto the resurrection from the dead, and are with the LORD. Those who were slain under Pagan and Papal persecution, for the Word of GOD and for the testimony which they held, had long since cried with a loud voice: saying, How long, O LORD, holy and true, dost Thou not judge, and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. And now, this having been fulfilled by another noble army of Martyrs, gathered unto the LORD, some of whom have preceded as "the first fruits," while others have followed under the reign of Antichrist, their united efforts are put forth, and they come from the temple of God in heaven, to the judgment of the beast and false prophet, and those that are with them. The sickle being seen in the hand of this angel coming from the temple of God, shows that the LORD will commit the execution of this judgment unto them, or that He will use them to inflict His righteous indignation upon these reprobates, "so that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily He is a God which judgeth in the earth." The sickle is used to cut off from the earth. In the

Rev. vi. 9—  
11.

Ps. lviii. 11.

former case, when the harvest was reaped, it was significant of the taking away from the earth or the gathering of the saints unto the LORD; but in the present case, it is used "to cut off" the wicked from the earth, that they, like the clusters of the vine, being fully ripe, and having filled up the measure of their iniquity, may be cast into the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God.

"And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire, and cried with a loud voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God." This angel, who represents a *third* and distinct witness from those symbolized by the foregoing angel, is said to "come out from the *Altar*, having power over *fire*." In order to understand these emblems, it is necessary to refer to the symbolism from whence they are taken; that is to the Temple and Brazen Altar erected by Solomon. Now, the Altar which stood in the Court of the Temple, was the only Altar upon which the fire of God was seen burning. It was the office of the Priests to attend to this altar, and to keep the fire ever burning upon it, in order that the daily sacrifices offered thereon might be consumed. The threefold condition of God's people, the Jewish, the Christian, and the translated, may be traced in this chapter under the mystery of the Temple and its court. That of the Jewish, or earthly, represented by the *Court* in which the brazen altar was placed; that of the Christian, or heavenly, (yet clothed in mortal flesh) by the *Holy Place*: that of the translated or immortal

Vide Ex.  
xxix. 42;  
Levit. vi. 9—  
13; 2Chron.  
iv. 1.

condition, by the *Most Holy Place*, into which our LORD entered at His resurrection, and into which the saints enter when they receive their resurrection bodies. Now, as it is said, the company represented by the *Most Holy*, are gathered unto the LORD in their resurrection bodies, previous to the coming forth of the angel from the Altar: it follows that those who are represented by the court, must be upon the earth when the cry ascends to heaven for vengeance on the oppressor, and *that* people must be the JEWISH NATION, who as we learn from other parts of Scripture, will previously have been gathered into their own land, having the services of their altar re-established. We learn also from the latter chapters of Zechariah, as well as from other prophecies, that he who is the personal Antichrist, who heads up and leads all the confederate nations, will come up against them when thus restored, and will take their city, and *that* immediately before his destruction: for he shall fall upon the mountains of Israel and perish for ever. The LORD, speaking by the prophet Zechariah of the day when all nations shall be gathered together against Jerusalem to battle, Dan. xlii. 45. says, “ Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all people round about when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it,” &c. Zech. xii. 2. 3.

What then so natural as a voice from this oppressed nation crying out for vengeance upon its destroyer? “ He cried with a loud voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle,

and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth: for her grapes are fully ripe." The angel which comes out from the altar is said to have "power over fire," that is, over the fire which is used for the destruction of the flesh: for the fire upon the altar was kept continually burning to consume the flesh of the sacrifices. And as this Antichristian company, under the symbol of "the vine of the earth," are composed of apostate men, who have forsaken their allegiance to CHRIST, and have joined themselves to His personal adversary, the fire here spoken of represents their entire destruction by God's righteous judgment. As the flesh of the sacrifices was consumed upon the Altar, and the ashes removed from the court out of sight, so the enemies of the LORD shall be utterly consumed, and be seen no more for ever. As it is written, "God shall Ps. lli. 5. likewise destroy thee for ever. He shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place, and root thee out of the land of the living."

This judgment is further symbolized by the act of the treading of the winepress—"And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." The *Vintage* is the last act of ingathering of the fruits of the earth. And the treading of the winepress here denotes the final act of God's wrath, as detailed in chapter xix. The gathering and the treading, appear to be two distinct acts. The gathering of the clusters of the vine of the earth precedes, and prepares for, the treading of the winepress. "The Beast and the kings of the earth Rev. xix. 19

Rev. xvi. 14. and their armies are *gathered*." "The kings of the earth and of the whole world are *gathered* to the battle of that great day of God ALMIGHTY." The place of their gathering is also mentioned—"He *gathered them together* into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Megiddo had been the scene of many great battles. It is spoken of in the song of Deborah and Barak, as the place of *gathering*, when Sisera fell: "The kings came and fought; then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo." And reference being made to the Hebrew tongue, seems to intimate what we have already learnt from this prophecy, that the scene of this last conflict of the apostate nations, will be in the mountains of Israel. The *preparation* for this gathering is noted under the sixth vial, but the *act of excision* is not till the seventh, when the LORD JESUS comes out of heaven with all His faithful ones, to smite the nations, and to rule them with a rod of iron; when it is said of Him, Rev. xix. 15. "He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God:" and in which act He is Rev. xix. 13. described as "clothed with a vesture dipped in blood." It is of this final act of God's righteous judgment that the prophet Isaiah speaks,—  
 Isa. lxiii. 1—4. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with died garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me; for I will tread them in Mine anger and trample them in My fury, their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment. For the day of vengeance is in



Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come.”  
 Of this day of slaughter the prophet Joel also speaks—  
 “Put ye in the sickle : for the harvest is ripe : come <sup>Joel iii. 13,</sup>  
 get you down ; for the press is full, the fats overflow ;  
 for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes,  
 in the valley of decision : for the day of the LORD is  
 near in the valley of decision.”

It is called “the winepress of God’s wrath,” because it is the natural life of the degenerate man which is destroyed. The completeness of the wrath is represented under the description of “blood coming out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles.” The bridles represent the *leaders* of the Antichristian host, who are *in the hand* of and *directed by* their *Head*. For as a rider governs his horse by means of a bridle, so will the personal Antichrist, by means of the kings of the earth (who give their power and strength unto him) and their subordinate chiefs, guide the nations which follow in his train. This interpretation is confirmed by the description given us of the last act of judgment in the nineteenth chapter : for there we read, that the Beast and the false Prophet are taken and cast *alive* into the lake of fire, while the *remnant*, that is, the kings of the earth and their armies, are slain with the sword, and which is here represented by the blood coming up to the “bridles.”

The winepress is also said to be “TRODDEN WITHOUT THE CITY.” There are only two cities to which this figure can be referred, viz., either to “the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth,” (Rome) ; or to the city Jerusalem, outside whose walls the Antichrist is said to fall, even upon the mountains of Israel. <sup>Dan. xi. 45.</sup>  
 The latter city must here be referred to, although it is also applicable to the city of Rome as the *seat* of this

Antichristian power or eighth head, for inasmuch as he, (the personal Antichrist) is absent from this centre of his power at the time of his destruction, his destruction may be justly termed "without the city."

Another proof that this prophecy describes the destruction of the personal Antichrist, is found in the mystical number, "*one thousand six hundred furlongs*;" and to which may be given a threefold interpretation, all illustrating this view. First, it will apply in its measurement to the Holy Land, where the Antichrist shall fall. Secondly, to the people who shall be cut off, and trodden in the winepress of the wrath of God; that is to say, the people who have acknowledged and been led on by the Antichrist as their head. These two applications of the number have been adopted by many commentators. *Danbuz* considers the space of 1600 furlongs to be the measure of Palestine, and applies it *figuratively*, to the length of the *mystical* apostate Israel; that is the whole extent of Christendom. The learned *Mede* suggests the fact of 1600 stadia being the length of *the States of the Church* in Italy, from Rome to Verona. And *Faber* adopts the same view. This twofold application appears to be confirmed by the prophecies of the Old Testament to which we have already referred. *Isaiah*, describing the final judgment of the last Antichristian confederacy, says,—"*For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.*" *Ezekiel* prophesying of the last act of judgment, says, "Thou shalt be desolate, O Mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it: and they shall know that I am the LORD." And he also says, "he shall fall upon the mountains of Israel." Thirdly, the number in its mystical meaning is symbolical of

Elliot, V. iv.  
9, 7.

Isa. xxxiv. 8.

Ez. xxxv.  
15; xxxix. 4.

the completeness of the judgment. For as forty was the number of years allotted to consume a people who had refused, through unbelief, to enter into their promised earthly inheritance, so one thousand six hundred, the square of forty, represents its antitypical fulfilment in the Christian Church, in a people who refuse, not an earthly Canaan, as did the Jews of old, but a spiritual and heavenly inheritance, which they attain not, through unbelief. (This mystery of the number is in analogy with the mystery of other numbers in the Scriptures: for as the simple number always refers to the lower condition, so its square refers us to a higher, and the cube to one higher still.) In this point of view, how solemn are the words of the HOLY GHOST, which are addressed to us in S. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews. "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness." And again, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God."

In conclusion, having thus expounded chapters xii. and xiii. which contain symbolic representations of four forms of evil, seen to be contemporaneous in the Church of CHRIST from the beginning to the end of the dispensation; and having shown the sequence of events as revealed to us in this fourteenth chapter, commencing with the translation of the saints, and terminating in the destruction of the personal Antichrist, at the coming of the LORD; we now come to *the vision prefatory to the vials*, as contained in the fifteenth chapter.

## PREFATORY VISION TO THE VIALS.

Rev. xv.

1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* Thy works, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY; just and true *are* Thy ways, Thou King of saints.

4 Who shall not fear Thee, O LORD, and glorify Thy Name? for *Thou* only *art* holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments *are* made manifest.

5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

This fifteenth chapter of the Revelation contains the Prefatory Vision to the Vials; and according to the interpretation which we have elsewhere given concerning their action during the Christian dispensation, we should expect to find in this vision something analogous to the judgments to which it is the preface: for as each of the prefatory visions we have already examined presents us in its symbolism with a perfect view of that aspect of the Church which its subsequent sevenfold series is intended to bring out, so we shall

find in this preface, the symbolic representation of the character of those who escape the judgments, and who are used as administrators of them with the LORD. Thus, for example, the prefatory vision to the Epistles is a revelation of the perfect constitution of the Church of CHRIST in its spiritual aspect or character, and the seven epistles to the churches represent the phases of the Church's history before this perfect constitution is realized. The preface to the seals is a vision of the LORD JESUS seated upon His throne, exercising dominion over the earth, through the instrumentality of His Church, and the seven seals as they are opened, show how all events in the world are overruled by God, to the furtherance of His eternal "decree," which saith, "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Ps. li. 6. The prefatory vision to the trumpets reveals Him in the character of our High Priest, which office He sustains for ever in connection with His Church. The seven trumpets show the various aspects which the Church will assume or pass through in its ecclesiastical character, before it attains to this high position before God. In like manner the prefatory vision to the vials reveals the character and perfect endowment of those, who, yielding themselves unto God, are preserved from those forms of evil which we have just expounded, and who escape the judgments symbolized in the vials; which company are here represented as gathered into one at the end of the age, when they will finally triumph, and be able not only to sing the song of Moses, but the song of the Lamb also!

"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues: for in them is filled up the wrath of God." The first

thing presented to our notice is, that the sign here revealed, is seen in *heaven*, which we have learned in the twelfth chapter, represents the spiritual Church of CHRIST; "heaven" being an emblem of the spiritual.

This sign is called "great and marvellous," because it has reference to *judgment*, which is God's "strange work," and which He never executes upon any man, or system, or company of men, until such corruption has been manifested as to leave no hope of remedy.

"Seven angels" are introduced in analogy with the series to which the vision is prefatory, and their presence indicates that the judgments which they execute are administered by the Church upon apostate men; God's instrumentality in the Church being always represented by an angelic ministry. This also is in perfect agreement with our exposition of the Epistles, which are addressed to a ministry of the same kind; and also with that of the seven trumpets which are sounded by seven angels. The out-pouring of these vials, proceeding from such a ministry, reminds us at once of the authority and power invested in those who occupy the high and holy office of angel or Bishop. For as they are called to watch over, and feed the flock committed to their charge, and to blow the trumpet in Zion, and to sound an alarm in God's holy mountain, that His people may be warned and preserved from the enemy, even so are they commissioned and empowered to inflict punishment, to excommunicate, and even to deliver offenders, if need be, over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be preserved in the day of the LORD JESUS. Nay, more, they have power both to bind and unloose.

S. Matt. xvi.  
19.

On the meaning of the word *last*, as applied to these vials, we have already spoken in our prefatory remarks

concerning the vials, page 111. "And in them is filled up the wrath of God;" that is to say, when they are exhausted, His wrath shall have ceased: for it will end in the entire destruction of the wicked. They may be well termed *the last*, because they are never inflicted till all means of correction and reproof have failed to bring the subjects of them to repentance. For God willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn unto Him and be saved. The LORD is slow to wrath, and in His long-suffering He waiteth to be gracious. But if the wicked repent not, and will not turn from their evil way, He will whet His sword, and His hand shall take hold of judgment.

Ex. xxxiii.  
11; and 2  
S. Pet. iii. 9.

Ps. vii. 12.

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire, and they that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass having the harps of God." We have here represented those upon whom the judgments do not come, but who having been faithful are made meet for the kingdom of heaven. The "*sea*" is an emblem of peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. "*Glass*" is the symbol of transparent purity, and is so used in the description of the holy city, the bride, the Lamb's wife. Its being "*mingled with fire*" is expressive of suffering and trial. Malachi represents the LORD's people as purified and cleansed like gold and silver are purged in the refiner's fire, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. S. Peter says, "If need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of JESUS CHRIST;

Rev. xvii. 15.

Rev. xxi. 12.

Mal. iii.

1 S. Pet. i. 6.  
9; and iv.  
12.

whom having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory ; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." And again, " Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you : but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of CHRIST'S sufferings, that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." The " sea of glass mingled with fire," therefore, represents those who have been thus purified as by fire ; who have learnt obedience by the things which they suffered, and who, through faith in the blood of CHRIST, and by the sanctifying presence and power of the HOLY GHOST, are delivered from all stain and defilement of the flesh, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, that they may stand unblameable before God in love.

This figure, we believe, represents the great body of those who are redeemed unto God out of every kindred, and people, and tongue, and nation, comprehending that great multitude described in the seventh chapter, as " standing before the throne, which are said to come out of great tribulation, and to have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." For whether the tribulation out of which they come be that of the last, under the personal Antichrist, when men " shall be saved as by fire," or whether it be the tribulation to which every true follower of CHRIST is subject, it matters little, because we know from the assurance of our LORD and His Apostles, that no true Christian can escape that tribulation which arises out of a mind conformed unto CHRIST, and must ever follow the faithful testimony



to the world that it is evil, and "lieth in the wicked one."

The company who "*stand upon the sea of glass*," is that elect number represented under the symbol of 144,000, and who are pre-eminently distinguished as the elect of God over the great mass or multitude of the redeemed, which special election no one familiar with the imagery of this book can fail to recognize as a part of the mystery of God, when completely unfolded. Thus for instance, in the seventh chapter, the sealed number are distinguished from the multitude. In the twelfth chapter, the man-child is distinguished from the woman; and in the twenty-first, the holy city is distinguished from those who walk in the light of it. And here, these who stand upon the sea of glass, there can be no doubt, are the same company as the sealed ones who escape the judgments in chapter vii., and the 144,000 who stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion. And the reason why they are not numbered in the fifteenth chapter is very obvious. For the visions contained in the two former relate to the time of the end, when the number of God's elect is accomplished, and the mystery of God finished; whilst the vision in the chapter before us, commences with, and extends over the whole dispensation. In this vision we see the Church militant, triumphing, from time to time, over all the powers of darkness, and going on "conquering and to conquer," till the consummation of all things when "mortality shall be swallowed up of life," as S. Paul, speaking of the spiritual warfare in his days, says, "Thanks be unto God, which always <sup>2 Cor. ii. 14.</sup> causeth us to triumph in CHRIST, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place." But the *sealing* in the seventh chapter reveals an act of

God in His Church at the end of the age, preparatory to the translation ; and the 144,000 in chapter xiv. standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, is a revelation of the translation itself, or of those who have attained unto it.

The reason then being thus explained why the company standing on the sea of glass mingled with fire, could not be numbered in this vision, we proceed to the further consideration of it. They are said to obtain the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name. This we have previously explained in our interpretation of the thirteenth chapter. And we believe that the vision of the vials was necessarily postponed from following immediately after the trumpets, that these mysteries of iniquity might be described and understood, because it is upon the men that worship the beast, and the image of the beast, and receive his mark, and the number of his name, that these judgments are poured out. In this arrangement, the wisdom and goodness of God are manifest : for unless these mysteries of iniquity had been understood, before these great and marvellous judgments were revealed, we could not have seen them in their true light, and given glory to God, or justified Him therein.

We may remark, also, touching the goodly company here represented as standing upon the sea of glass, that in the original they are spoken of not in the *past* participle, as in the English version, but in the *present*—not as those that *had* conquered, but (τοὺς νικῶντας) those that *were* conquering, implying a *present* warfare, or a *continuous series of victories* ; which affords additional proof, that the vials of God's wrath are *not* poured out at the *end* of the age, but are contempora-

neous with the action of the Church in her militant state throughout the dispensation, commencing with the Church's first conflict with Antichrist, and terminating in that final victory described in the fourteenth chapter, when the beast is taken and cast into the lake of fire.

This victorious company are said to have *the harps of God*, which we have previously interpreted as the symbol of inspired song. The subject of their song on this occasion is given us in the following words—

“And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY ; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints, Who shall not fear Thee, O LORD, and glorify Thy Name ? for Thou only art holy ; for all nations shall come and worship before Thee, for Thy judgments are made manifest.” Their song presents to us a true and distinct form of rejoicing and triumph. First, the triumph of Moses and the children of Israel over Egypt, designates their victory over their fleshly enemies, or over the power of the carnal or natural man ; Egypt being an emblem of the flesh. Secondly, the song of the Lamb designates their triumph over Satan, and all his hosts, which are far higher and more powerful enemies than Moses had to contend with ; and shows that these faithful servants of the Lord fought not against flesh and blood merely, but against principalities and powers, against spiritual wickedness (or evil spirits) in heavenly places.” And these two forms of victory, as will be perceived, answer to the distinct characters of the beast and his image, which they overcome. For the beast is Antichrist in the flesh, manifested in the wisdom and rule of this world ;

whilst the image is the higher form of rule and power, exercised by devil-possessed men, and in a system instinct with the unrestrained spirit of the evil one.

Vide Rev. ii.  
and iii.

Those who stand upon the sea of glass, are those that **OVERCOME**. And such there have been in every period of the Christian Church. Hence there is a special and peculiar promise made to such under every period of the Church's warfare. As for example, to the Church of Ephesus—"To him that *overcometh* will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." To the Church of Smyrna—"He that *overcometh* shall not be hurt of the second death." To the Church of Pergamos—"To him that *overcometh* will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." To the Church of Thyatira—"He that *overcometh*, and keepeth My words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I have received of My FATHER." To the Church of Sardis—"He that *overcometh* the same shall be clothed with white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My FATHER, and before His angels." To the Church of Philadelphia—"Him that *overcometh* will I make a pillar in the temple of My God: and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name." To the Church of Laodicea—"To him that *overcometh* will I grant to sit with Me in My throne,

even as I also overcame, and am set down with My FATHER in His throne." These promises being made to those that OVERCOME, show that GOD has had an elect people who have been victorious, and have triumphed over the enemies of CHRIST, and His Church, in every period of her history.

In this song, they magnify and praise the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY for His great and marvellous works, not only in their deliverance from such deadly enemies, but from *His judgments*, which are "as a great deep." They adore Him as their King, to Whom they gladly submit themselves, and yield implicit obedience; vindicating all His ways, as holy, just, and true. And in their adoration and wonder, they exclaim—Who shall not fear Thee, and glorify Thy Name? As though the marvel was, that any could be found not to do it. And they rejoice in the knowledge, that these judgments shall end in all nations coming to worship before Him.

"And after that I looked, and behold the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened; and the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles." We have here presented to us that form of spiritual life and power, from whence these judgments proceed. The source from whence they issue, is described under the symbol of *the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony*. In order to understand this figurative language, we must consider what these distinct figures signify by referring to their meaning in other places. First, in regard to the *temple*. We have already seen that this emblem represents the condition of those, in whom the HOLY GHOST dwelleth as a Person; as it is

1 Cor. vi. 19;  
2 Cor. vi. 16.

Rev. xix. 10.

written, "Ye are the temple of the HOLY GHOST, and God dwelleth in you." Secondly, the *tabernacle* is a symbol of the Church in the flesh, as a witnessing body upon the earth. And the *testimony* represents that witness, or word of testimony, which the servants of God are called upon to bear. Hence they are said in another place to have "the testimony of JESUS in the spirit of prophecy." This combined symbolism of "the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven," represents, therefore, that it is from the dwelling place of God in the Church, and through the agency of this spiritual body, in which the HOLY GHOST abides, that these judgments emanate, or by, and through whom, they are executed, as the servants of God. And, as in the Epistles, the seven Churches are personified in their respective angels, and the action of each Church is represented in, and by them; so the seven angels, who are here said to come out of the temple, or the spiritual body, are spoken of in the same sense, and express the highest form of ministry, which God uses in exercising these judgments. Their being also *clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles*, show that they are the representatives of CHRIST in His character of High Priest; being clothed as *He* is seen clothed, in the vision prefatory to the Epistles. And surely it may be safely affirmed, that those only who are His representatives, and made conformable unto His Image in righteousness and true holiness, can be trusted with the execution of the judgments of God.

"And one of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels, seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from

His power, and no man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." It is here stated, that the vials of wrath were given to the seven angels, by one of the four living creatures; from which we learn, that the ministry which executes these judgments, is subordinate in office to a ministry of a higher order, and one for universal rule; that is, the Apostolic. We infer it must be the ministry for rule in the universal Church, which commits the vials of wrath to the angels, because those to whom these vials are committed, are themselves *rulers* over distinct bodies of Christians in particular Churches. And this is, as we conceive, an act done in order to represent, that the action of the vials commenced during the Apostolic times, when the angels of the Churches were under the rule of Apostles. "The temple of God" also "was filled with smoke (or incense) from the glory of God and from His power." Here allusion is made to the typical service, which the High Priest of old fulfilled, when he entered into the most holy place to make intercession for the people, from whose golden censer, the incense ascended up before God. The same symbol is used in the prefatory vision to the trumpets, where it is said, "The smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." These passages undoubtedly synchronize, and refer to the period of the ascension of our LORD, when as the High Priest of His Church, He entered into the most holy place, to offer the prayers of all saints before the FATHER, and filling the temple of the HOLY GHOST with the incense of His intercession. The time, therefore, here referred to, when the temple is filled with smoke, is during

Rev. i.

Levit. xvi.  
12, 18.

Rev. viii.

*the time of intercession*, which continues during the outpouring of the first six vials : or in other words, throughout the whole Christian dispensation. In confirmation of this interpretation, we may remark, that  
Rev. xi. 15. at the sounding of the *seventh* trumpet, where the temple is also referred to, there is no mention made of smoke or incense ; which remarkable distinction shows that the time of intercession within the vail will then have ceased. And instead of these two passages in chapter xv. and xi. synchronizing, as some have imagined, the one relates to the period of our LORD's ascension, the other to that of His coming again.

No *man* being able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled, shows us, that it is by a spiritual agency, or by supernatural power of God, that these judgments are executed, and not by any *human* power : for no mere man, by natural power, is able to enter into that condition from whence this instrumentality is said to proceed. Nor will any man be able to enter into that condition of the kingdom, signified by the temple in unchanged bodies : that is, until this dispensation has entirely closed, and the kingdom of the LORD and of His CHRIST is manifested.



## PART VI.

THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS. THE FIRST SEAL.  
THE FIRST TRUMPET. THE FIRST VIAL.

IN passing from the prefatory visions to the visions themselves, we are presented with a perfect and comprehensive prophecy of the whole Christian dispensation, under a sevenfold division, given forth in a fourfold form or series; each series, or stream of prophecy, affording a prophetic history of one period, or era, of the Christian age. This mode of giving the fulness of prophetic truth, is in analogy with all Scripture. Thus, for example, the fulness of the one river that watered Eden flowed into four streams. The heads of the cherubim are fourfold. The Christian ministry is fourfold. Jerusalem which cometh down from God out of heaven, "lieth four-square." And Nebuchadnezzar's image, which pre-figured the four great empires, was made of four metals. Now, as the number seven is symbolic of completeness or perfection, it is reasonable to infer, that whatever action each of the series represents, must be complete and perfect of its kind. And if it be true, that they present distinct phases of Christian history, they must also synchronize, and their action begin at the beginning, and close with the end of the dispensation, otherwise we shall be obliged to suppose that the whole of

Gen. ii. 10.  
Ezek. i.  
Eph. iv. 11.  
Rev. xxi. 16.  
Dan. ii.

each distinct phase has not been represented. But, as in fact there has been no suspension in history, so it is not probable there is any omission in its prophetic representation. This being the case, the opinion we have already given of the construction of this prophecy, will, we are persuaded, on a patient investigation, be found to be the true one, to the exclusion of all other schemes. And consequently, we believe, we shall be able to give our readers a more consistent interpretation of these visions than any which has hitherto been given. We might proceed regularly through each form of prophecy in its seven-foldness from beginning to end, taking the seven epistles, seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials in succession. But as by so doing the synchronism of each series might not be so easily borne in mind, we prefer the plan here adopted, and shall take each series synchronically, giving the interpretation of the first Epistle, first seal, first trumpet, and first vial together, before we proceed to the second of each series ; and so on to the seventh, that by comparing the action represented by each phase, we may be able to discover whether they do or do not mutually sustain, illustrate and explain one another, as well as the history of the period they are intended to delineate. By such an arrangement, we are naturally led to expect that the history thus presented will divide itself into seven very manifest and distinct periods, easy to be recognized even by such as have but a very imperfect knowledge of Christian history. And this we find to be the case. For on a retrospective view of the past, and a prospective view of that which we believe to be yet to come, through the light which “ the sure word of prophecy ” has given us, “ unto which we do well to take heed,”

<sup>2</sup> S. Pet. i.  
19.

we are able to divide this dispensation into seven very distinct periods, namely :—

1. Purity, under apostolic rule.
2. Sorrow, under heathen persecution.
3. Elevation, under imperial rule.
4. Oppression, under papal domination.
5. Lawlessness, under Protestant influence.
6. Infidelity, under the plea of Christian liberty.
7. Judgment, under the reign of Antichrist.

We commence, then, our interpretation, by considering—

#### THE FIRST EPISTLE.

1 Unto the angel of the Church of Ephesus write ; These things Rev. ii. 1—7. saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks ;

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil : and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars :

3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for My name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

4 Nevertheless, I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5 Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen ; and repent, and do the first works ; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent.

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches : To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

The Epistles are prefaced by a vision of the LORD Jesus to His servant John, in which He is revealed as

possessing all these spiritual attributes and perfections proper to His office, as our spiritual Guide and Ruler. The description of Him in that vision is applicable not to one Church only, but to all the seven Churches, and therefore to the whole Catholic Church, extending through every period of the Christian age to its consummation. This is evident, as He applies to Himself a portion of the titles and attributes there symbolized, at the heading of each of the Epistles, in a manner wonderfully adapted to the condition of the several Churches to which they are written, and showing that, whilst they are for the use of the Church at all times, and of universal application, there is a speciality in each Epistle, descriptive of, and suited to a particular and definite period of the Christian dispensation, administering encouragement, reproof, warning, and admonition according to the condition of the Church at that time. And as there is no word or symbol used in this book without a special object, and distinct meaning; so we find that even the *name* of the place in which each Church is found, as well as the superscription of each Epistle, reveals the true light in which it is regarded by the LORD, and the aspect it bears towards Him.

Eph. v. 25—  
27; I. 4.

The first Epistle is addressed to the Church at Ephesus. The word Ephesus signifies *desired*, or *desirable*. The Church of CHRIST, as constituted at the beginning, was according to the heart and mind of the LORD. He betrothed her unto Himself in righteousness and in loving-kindness and in tender mercies. He loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any

such thing : but that it should be holy and without blemish before Him in love. S. Paul testifieth again, saying, "I have espoused you unto One Husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin unto CHRIST." Hence she is designated in the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST as "the Bride, the Lamb's wife." And we are bidden to rejoice, and be glad when she makes herself ready, and to count them blessed who are called to the "marriage supper of the Lamb." This is that which He desires to see accomplished. For this He waits ; and hath long patience for it. The Church also waited for this at the first. Her heart was directed into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for CHRIST. Her affections were undivided. Her heart was fixed on her Beloved. She said, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His." <sup>Cant. ii. 16,</sup> "He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was love." The Church at that period of her history looked forward with delight for the time when the LORD JESUS should see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. The word Ephesus, then, serves to remind us of the condition of the Church at the beginning, when she was one in heart and mind with her risen and glorified LORD, loving the things which He commanded, and desiring those which He had promised. This Epistle is headed with these words :—

"These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." This designation of our LORD is especially suitable to the primitive or apostolic times. The "*right hand*" is an emblem of the Apostleship, by means of which the seven stars, or angels of the churches are upheld and sustained in the fulfilment of their ministry. The declaration also, that

“ He walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks,” equally points to a time, when the LORD JESUS was acknowledged in His Apostles, when they held the Church together as one, visiting and superintending all ; and when He was manifestly present in the midst of His people, not only in the sevenfold light of angelic ministry, but also in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. As an apostleship is the ordinance of the LORD, as His right hand, for holding the churches together in one body, so the angel or chief minister of each church, with his complement of elders, was held responsible for the due exercise of his ministry, and care of the flock committed to his charge. The name of “ *angel* ” is the generic title of a chief shepherd over a flock, and it was by the exercise of this ministry that the Divine authority, and sustaining strength of the love of JESUS, as the Spiritual Guide of His Church was manifested. In like manner, the seven golden candlesticks exhibited what the Church of CHRIST was, when it possessed a fulness of ministry, and a fulness of gifts, and also what it should have been till He come. The commendation of the angel of the Ephesian Church is equally characteristic of this period.

“ I know thy works and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them that are evil : and thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars : and hast borne, and hast patience, and for My name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.” The primitive Church was distinguished by her works of faith and labour of love, and patience of hope in the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. The description which is here given of her is not to be found in any other of

the Epistles, because in no subsequent period of the Christian Church were these fruits of the Spirit so fully manifested, nor such acts of aggression performed against the dominion of darkness. The Church then went forth, "Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." In less than half a century the Gospel had been preached to the whole world, and unto the ends of the earth. The Church going forth in the Name of THE LORD, and in the power of THE HOLY GHOST, carried with it, not the name only, but the power and reality of apostolic ministry; according to the word of CHRIST, "As the FATHER sent ME into the world, even so send I YOU." Neither could the Church at that time bear those that were evil. Witness Ananias and Sapphira, Simon Magus, Elymas the sorcerer, Hymenæus, and Alexander, and doubtless many others of whom these were only examples. The trial and conviction of false apostles was also a peculiar feature of the primitive Church. If there had been no true Apostles at the period to which the Epistle refers, there could not have been any imitation of them by others. A counterfeit is never assumed where the reality is not present. When true apostles were in the Church, Satan sought to mar the work of the LORD, by raising up false ones. But the primitive Church discerned and rejected them, and as long as she did so, she approved herself unto God. The charge also which is brought against the Church in this Epistle, is no less remarkable, fixing, as it does, the period of her first declension.

"Nevertheless, I have this against thee, that thou hast left thy first love." The giving up of the initial or first love was an act of the *primitive* Church, and cannot possibly refer to any other period of her history.

Cant. vi. 10.

Acts v. 1  
viii. 1 xiii. 1  
1 Tim. i. 20.

For although it be possible for individuals to forsake their first love at any era of the Church, the whole Church could not, except at the beginning of its history, be said with propriety to have forsaken its first love. The *first* love is the love of Espousals, or that which the Church realized when she was espoused as a chaste virgin unto CHRIST, under Apostles. And having declined from this, she is admonished to return to its fervency and purity, and to do her *first* works ; by which alone the Church could be raised up and builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.

“ Remember, therefore, *from whence thou art fallen ; and repent*, and do the *first* works ; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent.” For the interpretation of the “ Candlestick,” as a symbol, we must go to the Tabernacle, (which S. Paul tells us was a shadow of heavenly things), and we find in its description seven branches supporting seven lamps, with ornaments of knops, and flowers, symbolical of a church endowed with the fulness of CHRIST’s ministry, and with the gifts and fruit of the Spirit. The removal of the candlestick must imply, therefore, the absence of that which was symbolized by it. And we know that when Apostles were lost, the gifts of the Spirit soon afterwards ceased, and the Church failed to give forth her perfect light. How could it be otherwise, when the light and life of CHRIST were quenched in her ? It was an inevitable consequence of that declension in faith and love which came over the whole Church—upon Priest as well as people ; which is so often complained of in the Apostolic Epistles, and from which the Church might easily have recovered at that early period



if she had hearkened to the exhortation to *repent*, and to do the *first* works, as is intimated in the commendation which follows : —

“ But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.” It appears from the writings of Irenæus, Augustine, and Epiphanius, that the Nicolaitanes were heretical concerning the faith of CHRIST, insubordinate and licentious, and this jealousy for the true faith and holiness of the Church, and hatred of the deeds of the Nicolaitanes can apply only to the first period of the Christian Church, when she was in the light of CHRIST, and under the guidance of Apostles.

“ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.” This admonition is common to all the Epistles. From which we learn ; first, the responsibility under which every one comes who “ hears the words of this Prophecy.” Secondly, that the HOLY GHOST, though greatly grieved and quenched, is ever present, and ready to speak, whensoever there is an ear to hear. “ The gifts,” as well as “ the calling of God are without repentance.” But He cannot speak to a people who will not hear, neither can He work by a people who will not be used by Him. The Church may forsake her first love ; Apostles may cease ; Angels may be removed ; the true pattern of the House of God may be obliterated or disregarded ; yet the LORD JESUS remains the same. He, though alone, and forsaken, is unchangeable. And the HOLY GHOST being in the midst of His people, forsakes not His office, but ever seeks to rekindle the fire of love in the Church, so to gain an ear, that He may speak of the things of CHRIST, and restore His ordinances and gifts for the perfecting of the body. Accordingly there has been no period of Christian history in which

there has not been a testimony of the HOLY GHOST. And if the ordinances of CHRIST, as given at the first are ever to be restored to the Church, that she may be prepared for the Coming of the LORD, and presented as a chaste Virgin unto CHRIST, how can they be called into manifestation but by the Spirit? that is—the LORD JESUS speaking from heaven by the HOLY GHOST.

Acts xiii. 1—  
4.

And shall not He who said, “Separate *Me* Barnabas and Saul for the work of the ministry,” call men to office now? Surely, if there be any truth to which these seven Epistles bear witness, it is to this—that the HOLY GHOST still abideth with us, and hath not forsaken His office. We may also learn from this appeal being made in each Epistle that there is a speciality in the address which is made by the Spirit, and that what He speaks is suitable to the condition of the Church, or to that state in which she is found in each distinct period. This will more fully appear in considering the *promise* attached to each Epistle. The promise to the Ephesian church is :—

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” The Church of CHRIST on earth is described in all the Epistles as militant, being engaged in a spiritual conflict. At the first period of her history she was the aggressor; she waged war against all the powers of darkness; and her conflict was ever crowned with victory, as S. Paul testifies—“Now, thanks be unto God Who always causeth us to triumph in CHRIST, and maketh manifest the knowledge by us in every place. And there is a conflict in which the Church engages peculiar to every period of her history. Hence the promise in each Epistle is appropriate to the conflict of the period characterized. The tree of life,

which stood in the Garden of Eden at the beginning of the Creation, was doubtless an emblem of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in Whom alone is immortality and eternal life, and reference being made in this Epistle to that tree of life, shows that the promise has relation to the primitive condition of the Church of CHRIST, or that new creation and heavenly condition which was manifested at the beginning of the Christian age, and from which the Church was tempted to depart, as is evidently implied in the words of S. Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians, "For I am jealous over 2 Cor xi. 2. you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin unto CHRIST. But I fear, lest by any means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity which is in CHRIST." The way to the tree of life was preserved and kept in Eden, by means of Cherubims and a flaming sword; and these were emblems of the ministers of CHRIST, which were given to preserve and to keep the life inviolate. JESUS said, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the FATHER but by Me." And that we might come unto Him, and feed upon Him, and live for ever, He gave these Ministers unto the Church. And had she continued in the faith, she would have secured to herself that fulness of blessing contained in the promise, even life for evermore, and would have experienced fully the truth which our LORD spake, when He said—"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die." And though the Church did not attain unto this in the first period of her history, and death hath in consequence

prevailed until now, and holds dominion over the bodies of men, the promise is still true to those that overcome, and implies that God will secure to them their portion in the kingdom, while the apostacy of others will deprive them of their inheritance.

Having seen the peculiar relation which this Epistle bears to the Apostolic times, we will now consider the next phase of this period as revealed to us—

### THE FIRST SEAL.

Rev. vi. 1, 2. 1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

The Seals represent the Civil phase of the Christian age, and are opened by the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in His character as the REDEEMER of mankind, being represented in His human nature by the name of the *Lamb*. When the first Seal was opened there was heard as it were the voice of *thunder*. This emblem is used in many parts of Scripture as significant of *the voice of God*. It is written in the book of Job, "He thundereth with the voice of His excellency." And again, "Canst thou thunder with a voice like Him?" David also speaking of the majesty of JEHOVAH says, "The voice of the LORD is upon many waters, the God of glory thundereth." As thunder, therefore, is significant of the voice of God, Who speaketh by the HOLY GHOST in the ordinances of His Church, especially in that highest of all ordinances—an Apostleship, this symbolic representation intimates, that it was at the beginning of the Christian age these visions began to

Job xxxvii.  
4; x. 9.

Ps. xxix. 3.

be opened or to receive their fulfilment. And this is further confirmed by the fact that the first living creature which calls attention to the events revealed by the vision is the one like to a lion, who says, "Come and see;" intimating thereby that it is the Office of the ministers of CHRIST, not only to call attention to, but to explain the mystery of God's Providence among the nations.

"And I saw, and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him and he went forth conquering and to conquer."

"The *horse and its rider*," are emblems used in the Holy Scriptures to denote a kingly government, or the power and authority of the State going forth in its hosts, and guided by its king or ruler. Egypt and its king were thus personified in the Song of Moses, when Israel were delivered from the power of the oppressor,

"Saying, I will sing unto the LORD: for He hath triumphed gloriously; *the horse and his rider* hath He thrown into the sea." Ex. xv. 1.

The same emblems are used also in relation to the kingdom and dominion of the LORD,—"*The LORD of Hosts* hath visited His flock, *the house of Judah*, and hath made them as *His goodly horse in the battle*." Zech. x. 3—5.

Out of Him came forth the corner, out of Him the nail, out of Him the battle bow, out of Him every oppressor together. And they shall be as mighty men which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle; and they shall fight because the LORD is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded." In like manner the regal power of CHRIST is spoken of in the forty-fifth Psalm. David speaking of the things touching the king says,—  
"In Thy Majesty ride prosperously because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness, and Thy right hand shall teach Thee terrible things. Thine arrows are

Hab. iii. 8,  
9.

sharp in the heart of the king's enemies ; whereby the people fall under Thee." The prophet Habakkuk, says—"Thou didst ride upon Thine horses, and Thy chariots of *salvation*. *Thy bow* was made quite naked, according to the oaths of the tribes, even Thy Word." In the light then of Holy Scripture, we perceive the true meaning of these emblems of *the horse and his rider*, in relation to the power and rule of kingly governments.

These same emblems occurring also in all the four seals, require, in consistency, the same interpretation ; that is, they must have the same meaning in each of the four visions in which they are seen. And there can be no doubt "the *horse*" in each of these seals, is intended to designate the *people* ; and "his *rider*" the ruling power ; because it is *the civil* phase which is here represented. This *first* horse with its rider, therefore, represents the Roman Empire as triumphing over all its enemies in the person of the emperor, and which at this time was subduing all nations under its dominion. The horse is *white* because it represents *victory* and *triumph*. The rider having a crown presented to him, represents the manner in which the Imperial power was conferred upon the most successful General or Commander of the Roman armies.

Though we believe this to be the true *interpretation* of the vision, it may also have an *application* to the triumphs of the Gospel, which was then being proclaimed by the servants of CHRIST ; and the symbolic language of the Seal may be said to express the power of the LORD as manifested in subduing and overcoming His enemies at the beginning of the Christian age. Nor is this view inconsistent with the civil aspect, in representing thus the triumph which Christianity achieved among the kingdoms of the world, when the

Gospel was first preached among the nations. And we know that a "Crown of righteousness will be the reward of the successful Christian warrior, according to the words of the LORD,—“Let no man take thy crown.” And again, “Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible.” And in his Epistle to Timothy, he says, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the LORD, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them that love His appearing.” In the vision contained in the nineteenth chapter of this book, the LORD JESUS is also seen coming out of heaven upon a white horse, and having upon His head many crowns, when He comes to take possession of His *Kingdom*: and His saints who shall reign with Him upon the earth in this kingdom of righteousness and peace, also come with Him upon white horses; which shows in a striking manner, that the emblem of the horse and rider has reference to a civil or regal aspect, and not as some have supposed to priestly rule.

The reader will scarcely fail to perceive, how exactly this civil aspect of the first period of Christian history, corresponds with the spiritual, as represented in the first Epistle. We shall find no less striking coincidence or agreement in

#### THE FIRST TRUMPET.

6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. Rev. viii. 6, 7.

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

Numb. x. 1  
—10.

The trumpet, as we have seen, was used for ecclesiastical purposes, and only by the Priests. Its first recorded sound was heard from Mount Sinai, when Moses the servant of the LORD was called into the Mount to receive the lively oracles. The antitype of this directs us to the time, when the LORD JESUS, the Prophet like unto Moses, was taken up into heaven, and a new covenant made with the house of Israel, in which the holy law of love to God and man is written on the fleshy tables of the heart by the HOLY GHOST sent down from heaven. It is to this event the first trumpet in the series relates; according to the prophetic declaration of the forty-seventh Psalm, "God is gone up with a shout, and the LORD with the sound of a trumpet." This is in agreement with the Levitical law, which required that on the great day of atonement the trumpet should be blown. And thus we perceive how the blowing of this trumpet was spiritually fulfilled when the day of atonement began under the New Covenant; CHRIST having entered into the Holiest of all with His own blood. This circumstance might be sufficient of itself, to lead us to conclude that the first trumpet sounded at our LORD's Ascension, when He entered with His own blood within the veil. But the notification of events which this trumpet gives, will afford us additional confirmation. It is said when the first angel sounded,—

Levit. xxiii.  
14; xxv. 9.

"There followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth, and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up." The HOLY GHOST had not long been given; the Church was only just constituted; the law of love had but recently been written on the heart, and visibly manifested in the going forth of the Church as one



body to evangelize the world, when the work of the LORD was marred ! The HOLY GHOST had been given according to CHRIST's promise ; the rain from heaven had fallen in copious showers on God's heritage, watering and refreshing the garden of His right-hand planting : but scarcely had the earth which drinketh in the rain which cometh oft upon it, brought forth its green grass, and its trees yielding fruit, than man began to quench the Spirit, and the Church to lose her first love. The Spirit of CHRIST was grieved and bound in the ministries of His Church, and thus, symbolically, the rain from heaven being frozen, fell upon the earth in the form of hail. Had not the love of the Church waxed cold—had she not forsaken her initial love—this could not have happened ; but failing in love, strifes, divisions, and heresies ensued ; giving rise to fleshly zeal ; and loss of spiritual life, accompanied with fierce persecutions—" fire mingled with blood." And as a consequence of these things, a third part of the *ministers* of CHRIST were rendered useless, unable to fulfil, as heretofore, the work of faith and labour of love, being as the " trees burnt up." And through lack of the genial showers from above, the people became impoverished, and devoid of that spiritual life and strength, which distinguished the early converts to Christianity, " all green grass was burnt up." That such is the true interpretation of these symbolic expressions, is evident from their use in other parts of Scripture. David said, " I lie among them that are set on *fire*, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword." And our LORD said, " I am come to send *fire* upon the earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled ?" *Blood* is an emblem of life, as it is written,—*" Flesh with the life thereof, which is*

Ps. lvii. 4.

S. Luke xli.  
49.

Gen. ix. 4.

the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." And again,—  
 Levit. xvii. 11. "the life of the flesh is in the blood." As blood is an emblem of natural, so it is of spiritual life. "Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." In regard to the "*trees*," they are used in the Scriptures as emblematical of persons in an official capacity. Our LORD Himself is evidently referred to as the tree of life. And the fir tree, the cedar, and the oak, are adopted to denote persons in authority and office. Isaiah also speaks of the LORD's people as "*trees of righteousness*." And the same prophet likens the people unto grass—"All flesh is grass."—"Surely the people is grass."

Isa. xl. 19, lv. 13, and lx. 12; Hos. xiv. 18; Isa. xxxvii. 24; 2 Kings xix. 21; Zech. xi. 2. Isa. lxi. 3. Isa. xl. 6, 7.

Whilst, then, the civil state of society was that of peace, as revealed in the opening of the first seal, and success attended the preaching of the Gospel among the nations; the Ecclesiastical or Trumpet phase as clearly represents to us that in the midst of this outward triumph, and ministry of the Gospel, the genial rain of the Spirit of God, which fell at first in such refreshing showers, had begun to be congealed into *hail*, occasioned by the forsaking of the first love of which complaint is made in the first Epistle. The ordinances of the Church had begun to be corrupted. False teachers in fleshly zeal propagated their heretical doctrines; and the saints were persecuted, who still held to the Apostles, and walked in the truth. "I wrote unto the Church, (says S. John) but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words; and not content therewith; neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth

3 S. John 9.

them that would, and casteth them out of the Church." So general was this defection, and persecuting spirit, that all the Apostles, whose Epistles have come down to us, complain more or less of it; verifying the assertion made in the vision, in which it is described as extending to a third part of men, standing in an official office, and to all the people. S. Paul, in his second Epistle to Timothy, Bishop of Ephesus, says—"All they of Asia have turned away from me."

2 Tim. i. 15.

We may also remark, that the expression, "the third part," whose symbolic meaning we have already explained, (page 131,) and which so frequently occurs in this series, shows that the events thereby symbolized, have an especial *ecclesiastical* aspect and bearing: of which, indeed, as we have seen, the trumpets themselves are symbolical. And it would also appear that the expression, "the third part," is used to teach us that the whole prophecy contained therein divides itself into three great divisions; namely, the *spiritual*, the *civil*, and the *ecclesiastical*. So the trees, of which a third part are said to be burnt up, must relate to men in a ministerial character, in contradistinction to the people, who are described as the "green grass."

To complete the history of the first period of the Christian dispensation, it remains that we consider the judicial phase as presented to us in

#### THE FIRST VIAL.

1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. Rev. xvi. 1, 2.

2 And the first went and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

The great voice coming out of the temple, is the voice of the HOLY GHOST from a Spiritual Body ; " the temple in heaven " being symbolic of the Church of CHRIST, which is " An habitation of God through the SPIRIT." And the vials of God's wrath being poured out by the seven angels, show that they are spiritual judgments, although they have an outward expression. This first vial is said to be poured out upon the *earth*, to signify that the plague described by this vial is inflicted upon men, who having departed from the faith of the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST, and consequently from their spiritual and heavenly standing in Him, are living as the denizens of this world. They are such as S. Paul describes in his Epistle to the Philippians : " For many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of CHRIST, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind *earthly* things." S. Peter also, speaking of those who had apostatized from the faith of CHRIST, says, " For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." S. Jude, in like manner, speaking of the apostacy in the Christian Church, and of the condemnation of such, says,

Eph. ii. 22. " These be they who separate themselves, sensual,

Phil. iii. 18.

2 S. Pet. ii. 20-22.

S. Jude 19.

having not the Spirit." Thus early in the days of the Apostles, men turned away from the grace of God, and became willing captives of Satan, and the dragon gained power and ascendancy over them. Many, promising themselves liberty, were led away by Satanic power, assuming it to be the power of God. And following the course of this world, which lieth in the wicked one, they received the mark of the beast, and worshipped his image. Upon such a class of men, this first vial of the wrath of God was poured out.

"And there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them that worshipped his image." The spiritual judgment here described represents the men on whom it falls as given over of God to live the old life in the sins of the flesh. They did not put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, but fulfilled the lusts of the flesh and of the mind. Instead of being subject to the LORD in His ordinances, they came under the power of the prince of this world, even Satan, the spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience, and upon whom, as S. Paul testifies, the wrath of God cometh. A noisome and grievous sore, coming upon them which had the mark of the beast, and upon them that worshipped his image, well describes the corrupt state of those who departed from the faith of CHRIST at the beginning, and became reprobate. And of the hopeless condition of such, S. Paul speaks in his Epistle to the Hebrews, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the HOLY GHOST, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repent-

Heb. vi. 4-8.

ance : seeing they crucify to themselves the SON of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain, that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs, meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing : whose end is to be burned."

## PART VII.

THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA. THE SECOND  
SEAL. THE SECOND TRUMPET. THE SECOND VIAL.

We proceed to consider the fourfold form of Prophecy in relation to the second period of the Christian dispensation, in the same order as before, commencing with the spiritual phase as revealed in

### THE SECOND EPISTLE.

1 And unto the angel of the Church in Smyrna write : These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive ; Rev. ii. 8—11.

2 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich), and *I know* the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of Satan.

3 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer ; behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried ; and ye shall have tribulation ten days : be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

4 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches ; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

The second Epistle is addressed to the angel of the Church in Smyrna. This name signifies *myrrh*. The Scriptures notice two kinds of myrrh. Myrrh electa, literally *free myrrh*, flowing as it does spontaneously of itself without incision, which is also called *stacte*, and considered the best ; and another kind of myrrh, which is obtained by incision or bruising, both kinds

Exod. xxx. 23. yield a fragrant smell. That kind called *stacte* formed one of the ingredients in the holy anointing oil, which was used at the consecration of the Priests under the law. Frequent mention is made of it in the Scriptures.

Ps. xlv. 8. The Psalmist says of the bride, "All thy garments smell of myrrh." When the eastern Magi came to worship the LORD, they "presented unto Him gold, frankincense, and *myrrh*." As gold is an emblem of truth, being the most precious of all metals; and frankincense of intercession; so myrrh is an emblem of sorrow. And as JESUS is the Truth, and the Intercessor, so is He emphatically the "Man of Sorrows." How often did the heart of JESUS overflow with sorrow! It flowed from Him spontaneously, as well

S. Matt. ii. 11. as by bruising. "He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." "He was also *wounded* for our transgressions, and *bruised* for our iniquities." The angel of the Church in Smyrna knew the fellowship of CHRIST's sufferings, and was made conformable unto His death. Polycarp is supposed to have been the angel of the Church to whom this Epistle was written, and he is spoken of as having suffered martyrdom in that place for the sake of CHRIST.

Vide Isa. liii.

The period to which this Epistle refers was one of great suffering and trial, such as the Church never witnessed before, nor since; nor ever will again, until the final trial under the personal Antichrist. As the fragrance of the pure myrrh is most agreeable and pleasant to our senses, so the sufferings which the faithful servants of God willingly and patiently endured for His sake, were most acceptable unto God, and ascended up before Him as incense, yielding a sweet

1 S. Pet. iv. 14. perfume: for thereby He was glorified. These sufferings were also needful: for the Church had left her



first love, and with this she had lost the ministries which were given for her perfection, and which alone could preserve her as a chaste virgin, pure, and undefiled ; and she needed now especially to be tried and purified by suffering. But there was One who manifested the most tender sympathy and compassion in all her tribulation, and showed Himself present to help and sustain her under them : as notified in the following words :

“ These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead and is alive again.” This designation, like all the seven, is contained in substance in the prefatory vision to the Epistles, of which we have already spoken, and is strikingly adapted to the Church in Smyrna, and to that period of Christian history, during which the Church of CHRIST was called to endure these heavy trials and persecutions. Therefore He presents Himself as “ The First,” the Primordial One, from whom all things originated, without whom nothing hath ever existed, or can subsist ; and “ The Last,” the eternal, immortal, unchangeable One, by and through whom all events are directed and made subservient to the eternal purpose of God. In the midst of vicissitudes, bereavements, and suffering, He remaineth the same, administering consolation, strength, and blessing. “ Having loved us from the beginning, He loveth us unto the end.” “ He is also touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; for He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, and therefore He is able to succour them that are tempted.” “ He was dead.” He came into the lowest condition of the creature, even the dissolution of its being. His body was entombed, and His soul descended into hades. But His soul was not left in hades, neither did

Vide S. John  
xiii. 1.  
Heb. iv. 15.

His body see corruption. The gates of hell could not prevail against Him. He rose from the dead, and is "The Living One," over whom death hath no more power, and He assures His faithful servants, that it shall not have dominion over them. He will swallow up death in victory. Because He lives, we shall live also.

"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, but thou art rich." This commendation of the Church shows that at this period of her history represented in the Epistle, she still bore a faithful witness to the truth; that she was a doer of the word, and not a hearer only. The living testimony which she bore to the truth brought her into great tribulation, and like her Divine Master, she was poor in this world's goods. Her spiritual riches stood in striking contrast with her worldly poverty. "I know thy poverty, but thou art rich." Poor in this world's possessions, but rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. The Church also, at this period, was tried and sore vexed by deceivers and blasphemous persons, holding the truth in unrighteousness.

"I know the blasphemy of them who say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." The term Jew is here used to designate a true Christian. That this is the meaning of the term, is evident by its being used by S. Paul, who says in his Epistle to the Romans, "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God." In his Epistle to the Colossians he writes thus, "In whom also (that is, in CHRIST,) ye

Rom. ii. 28,  
29.

Col. ii. 11.

are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of CHRIST, buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God who raised Him from the dead." To the Philippians he says, "We are the Phil. iii. 3. circumcision which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in CHRIST JESUS, and have no confidence in the flesh." The blasphemers, therefore, of whom the LORD speaks in the Epistle, were mere professors of His religion. The Church having lost its defences, gave admission to her greatest enemies. "I know," Acts xx. 29 says S. Paul, "after my departure grievous wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock." Some of whom entered even in the Apostle's time, and seized upon the highest offices. Heresies concerning the work and person of the LORD were common in the Church during this period, through which the Name of CHRIST was blasphemed; and those who followed these false teachers, forming themselves into separate communities, are here called "the synagogue of Satan," or the assembly of the adversary. In order to purge the Church of these enemies, it may be, the LORD permitted those terrible persecutions to come upon it, that it might be made manifest who were, and who were not, the spiritual seed of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise. Indeed, the sanctification of the Church under these troubles, seems implied in the following encouraging words—

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; or fear thou in nothing the things which thou art about to suffer; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto

death, and I will give thee a crown of life." How effectual these words were, the history of the Church declares, showing, as it does, that a noble army of martyrs fell gloriously in the conflict with the powers of darkness, fearing in nothing; their sufferings being fearlessly met, and patiently endured. The power which the devil should have to cast some of them into prison, does not mean merely banishment or solitary confinement, but the prison-house of death, through which, like our blessed Lord, they must pass, by a glorious resurrection, ere they can receive the crown of life which He has promised. Some have supposed that the ten days' tribulation, here spoken of, had its fulfilment in the ten persecutions of the Church, under the heathen emperors, and also in the ten persecutions under Dioclesian; and without doubting that these ten days have an application to these events, as marking the period to which this Epistle especially refers, we believe the true interpretation of the ten days consists in a more spiritual view, and that they have a primary reference to the character of the testimony borne by the saints to the Lordship and Kingdom of CHRIST; *ten* being the royal number; and the direct cause of their suffering was, their refusal to obey the Imperial edicts, which required them to conform to the religion of the State, and pay Divine homage to the emperor. This they refused to do, alleging that they owed obedience to a greater King and Lord than Cæsar, whom they must obey. In truth, this Epistle, in all its parts, is suited to the condition of the Church at this period, which all who have written upon its history agree in assigning to it. The importance of this Epistle to the Church is intimated as in others, by the exhortation and promise which follows :

“He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.” Though there is a speciality in this as in all the other Epistles, as to time, yet in their prophetic aspect, they are of universal application. The promise made to him that overcometh, is addressed to every faithful servant of CHRIST unto the end. “The second death” is a term very seldom used in Holy Scripture, but its definition is sufficiently clear. In two passages it is declared to be the lake of fire. And the only persons who are declared to be beyond the power of the second death, are those who have part in the first resurrection. The promise in the Epistle, therefore, to him that overcometh, is equivalent to the promise of being of the first resurrection. These will be beyond the power of the second death, because they will have attained unto the resurrection glory, from which there will be no possibility of falling away. Herein also we perceive the adaptation of the title of CHRIST in this Epistle, as “the First and the Last” to the promises here made.

Rev. xx. 14;  
xxi. 8.  
Rev. xx. 6.

We proceed now to consider the civil phase of this period as given us in

### THE SECOND SEAL.

3 And when He had opened the second seal, I heard the second Rev. vi. 3, 4. beast say, Come and see.

4 And there went out another horse *that was* red: and *power* was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

The civil phase represented by this seal is also in accordance with the history of the period described by the Epistle to the Church in Smyrna. Attention is

called to the opening of this seal, by the second living creature like a calf or ox, which (as we have already observed in our interpretation of the fourth chapter,) is emblematical of the pastoral office. This is remarkable, and worthy of notice. For as the former emblem showed that the first seal was opened during the Apostolic times, so the latter reveals that the pastoral ministry was dominant after Apostles had passed away. Even the announcement, therefore, in the opening of this seal, shows that it is parallel with the Epistle to Smyrna, because Bishops, or chief pastors, had become the Apostles' successors. This is confirmed by the Prophecy itself, and we need only refer to the history of that time to trace its fulfilment.

In the vision a man is seen riding upon a red horse, to whom a great sword is given, with power to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another with the sword. We may here observe the difference between the first and second seal. To the first rider is given a *crown*, to the second a *sword*; the first rode on a *white* horse, the second on a *red* one. The emblems of the former seal represented the empire in its triumphant aspect, bearing the chief rule over the nations, by its Emperor personified in the rider; and also the triumph among the nations of righteousness and peace through the success of the Gospel; whereas the emblems of this seal represent the empire as *contending* for mastery, and engaged in conflict, and slaughter. And we learn from *history*, that as the leading feature of the first period was that of triumphant conquest, so the leading feature of this second was that of war. Mr. Fry, interpreting this seal says,—“The Roman Empire was governed in peace until Hadrian, in A.D. 137, when he was suc-

ceeded by Antoninus Pius. But neither in this prince nor in the second Antonine, who succeeded him in 161, and reigned till 180, do we find any resemblance to the symbol in the prophetic vision before us, nor any great change or revolution in the world, which one might have expected to become the theme of prophecy. Gibbon has distinctly marked off these reigns as belonging to one era, when he observes: 'During a happy period, the public administration was conducted by the virtues and abilities of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines.' "

But next follows, as we read the history in its regular course, an epoch indeed, and an epoch of that importance, that Mr. Gibbon dates from it the decline and fall of this mighty empire. This was the accession of the tyrant Commodus, the son of Marcus Antoninus, at the death of that prince, A.D. 180. Gibbon thinks that Commodus was not, as he has been represented, "a tiger, born with an insatiable thirst of human blood, and capable from his infancy of the most inhuman actions;" but he owns, "his cruelty, which at first obeyed the dictates of others, degenerated into habit, and at length became the ruling passion of his soul." After stating the extent of his cruelties he adds,—“When Commodus had once tasted human blood, he became incapable of pity and remorse.”

For particular transactions the reader is referred to the narrative by Mr. Gibbon. He will there find fully explained what is here represented by the "red horse, and the great sword." And although these emblems would have applied to any other bloody tyrant in any age of the world; yet following the train of history from the preceding period of the first seal, Commodus

could not have been passed over; and the prophecy applies with great exactness to his reign.

Besides *the effects* attributed to his bloody administration, there is another note whereby we can apply the prophecy to Commodus. It is not the reign of every cruel tyrant that could produce the consequences here described, "*to take peace from the earth,*" and "*that they might slay one another with the sword.*" With many tyrants the evil has perished with themselves, or the virtue of a successor has healed the wounds of a bleeding country. This was remarkably the case when the adoptive father of Trajan received the empire after the death of the almost equally cruel Domitian. But mark the consequences of the excesses of Commodus on the welfare of that world, the government of which he had received in so peaceful a state. His mal-administration was capable, from the circumstances in which it occurred, of producing a new era in the history of mankind, and plunged the Roman Empire into endless scenes of civil wars and tumults. Mr. Gibbon particularly pronounces "the licentious fury of the Prætorian Guards," which now first discovered itself, to be the first symptom and cause of the decline of the empire. Of the event of the reign of Commodus, he remarks in another place, "a revolution which will ever be remembered, and is *still felt by the nations of the earth.*"

Rev. J. Fry,  
on the Se-  
cond Advent,  
Vol. II. p.  
311.

The civil aspect of society then, at this period, fully justifies the propriety of the change in the symbolic representation from the gift of a "*crown*," to that of a "*sword*" and from a "*white*" to a "*red* horse:" the one a symbol of peace and triumph, the other of war. And that it was a time when "peace was taken from the earth, and men killed one another with the sword"



is also sufficiently apparent from the history of this period, whence it appears moreover, as stated above, that the change was not merely temporary, from peace to war, but that the revolution which then took place *introduced principles tending to the dissolution of the empire.*

The Ecclesiastical phase belonging to this period is given us in

### THE SECOND TRUMPET.

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of <sup>Rev. viii. 8,</sup> the sea became blood;

9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

The emblem of a *mountain*, when used in a civil aspect or phase, signifies a kingdom or empire, but in an ecclesiastical phase it represents the Church. We have many instances of this use of the symbol in the Old Testament, showing the correctness of this interpretation. Thus the Babylonian empire is called by the prophet Jeremiah "a destroying mountain." And <sup>Jer. li. 25.</sup> the Church is spoken of by Isaiah, as "The mountain <sup>Isa. ii. 2.</sup> of the LORD's house." And speaking of the redemption to be accomplished in God's Church in the last days, he says, "And in this mountain shall the LORD <sup>Isa. xxv. 6—8.</sup> of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory." A "mountain," therefore, in the ecclesiastical aspect of this prophecy, must be interpreted of the Church,

and not of the State, and in this view it represents the fiery zeal, and persecuting power of the Church, occasioned by its divisions ; and agrees with the statement made in the Epistle concerning the spiritual aspect of this period.

“ *The sea* ” in this book is interpreted as an emblem of multitudes of people, among whom Christianity had been received. The falling of the mountain burning with fire into the sea, represents the persecuting and conflicting elements which wrought among the people at this period ; the result of which was that “ the third part of the sea became blood ; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died ; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.” A *ship* is an emblem used in the Scriptures to denote a church, or a community of Christian men. The “ *living creatures in the sea* ” are baptized persons. And the sea being turned into blood, represents the effects of the persecution, not only in the martyrdom of saints, but in the turning away of many from the faith of their baptism to the life of the flesh. Both of these conditions are represented by the blood ; that being the symbol of the natural life, whether offered to God in the martyr, or withheld and saved by the apostate, to the loss of the eternal life which had been given him in baptism : wherein he was made a member of CHRIST, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

By referring to those passages of the Old Testament, in which this symbolic expression “ *one third* ” is used, we find it either designates a class of people, the character of a class, or the judgments which overtake them.

Num. xv. 6. Under the law, “ one third ” of a hin of oil and

wine were offered with a ram. The ram is the symbol of Deaconship which heads up the people, as the ram is the head of the flock, and Deacons are the third order of ministry in the Christian Church.

In Ezekiel v. 2, this expression is used in reference to the character of the judgments which God was about to bring upon His people, "one third" were devoted to famine and pestilence; "one third" were given to the sword; "one third" to the dispersion among the Gentiles.

In Zechariah xiii. 8, 9, the "third part" relates to the character of the persons who are saved in the judgments. "The third part shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined; and I will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on My Name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people; and they shall say, The LORD is my God."

Without seeking after a more mysterious meaning, "the third part," seen in the vision, may represent that class of persons who suffered in the persecutions; that is, the Christian part, as distinct from the Pagan and Infidel. It may also be considered as pointing out the character of the judgments, or persecution, which was neither by pestilence, nor dispersion, but by the *sword*. This twofold application is supported both by the Epistle, and the Seal, as well as by the history of the period.

The Judicial phase of this period of Christian history is represented in the out-pouring of

#### THE SECOND VIAL.

3 The second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead *man*: and every living soul died in the sea. Rev. xvi. 3.

In the fifteenth verse of the seventeenth Chapter, "*the sea*" is interpreted by the Angel to mean "peoples and nations," that is, those people and nations among whom Christianity had been received. The second seal and trumpet, with which this vial synchronizes, disclosed a period of great turbulence and blood, which came upon the empire, and on the Church, by fierce contentions and fiery persecutions. This vial of wrath describes the terribleness of God's judgments upon those who rejected the Gospel of His Son, and consequently their own salvation. Their hatred and rejection of the truth were manifested in their fierce attempt to cast it out of the earth by condemning and destroying those who believed in it; and upon them this vial of wrath was poured out. Those who perished by the sword for CHRIST's sake, and all who held fast their faith in the Gospel, tasted not of this judgment: they "were not hurt of the second death," but secured to themselves "a crown of life." The judicial visitation which this vial inflicted was of a spiritual character, and it rested upon the unbelieving only—upon those who rejected the Gospel of the grace of God, or received it in vain. "The sea became as the blood of a dead man." This fearful emblem represents a state of spiritual death and corruption. It describes the great mass or body of those who were the subjects of this visitation, as utterly corrupt, and devoid of spiritual life; even as the blood of a dead man, which has no principle of life remaining in it.

The elements of the sea being changed into corruption, those living creatures which moved in it came under its deadly influence, and were so affected by it that they died; that is, they gave up their faith in the

Gospel of CHRIST, and became spiritually dead. They had embraced Christianity in name only, and not in heart; they had received it into the understanding only; and therefore, as history informs us, when persecution and tribulation arose on account of the truth, they were offended, fell away, and renounced even the profession of Christianity.

Christianity is a *life*—a living practical reality, and if it be not received as such, and spiritually apprehended, men will not live unto God; and not presenting themselves a living sacrifice unto Him, but being conformed to this world, they are in danger of falling away entirely from the grace of CHRIST, and of becoming utterly corrupt. And this may serve as a warning to us in these days, when the truth is in like manner evil spoken of, and rejected. And may we not fear, that when tribulation and persecution unto death shall arise, vast multitudes who now make a profession of Christianity, and think themselves safe, will give up their faith and perish? Verily, those only who make Christianity a *life*, and count all things as dross and dung compared with the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST, will be able to endure unto the end. Let no one therefore deceive himself, or count himself a disciple of CHRIST in deed and in truth, unless he takes up the cross daily, and follows Him: for though he may have the gifts of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, if he has not charity, he is nothing. <sup>1 Cor. xiii.</sup>

## PART VIII.

THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT PERGAMOS. THE THIRD  
SEAL. THE THIRD TRUMPET. THE THIRD VIAL.

IN considering the third period of Christian history as set before us in the above-named fourfold form of prophecy, the first thing which claims our attention is the spiritual aspect or phase represented in

### THE THIRD EPISTLE.

Rev. ii. 12—  
17.

12 And to the angel of the Church in Pergamos write; These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's seat *is*: and thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith, even in those days wherein Antipas *was* My faithful martyr, who was slain among you where Satan dwelleth.

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth *it*.

We have already seen in our exposition of these Epistles, that they form a most important part in the

construction of the Prophecy of this book, which cannot be understood in its completeness without them. They have not only a universal application to the Church of CHRIST at all times, which is full of instruction ; but they set before us also prophetically, the seven states or conditions through which she would have to pass during seven great epochs of the Christian age. The first aspect of her history presents her to us under the condition of having forsaken her first love ; the second shows her in the season of sorrow and persecution ; and this third refers to her union with and elevation in the world. At this stage, we have reached a period of her history, in which the evils arising from her departure from the ways and ordinances of the LORD, assume a more indelible character. As it was said of Israel, that “ they served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the Elders that outlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD that He had done for Israel :” so it may be said of the spiritual Israel, that they continued following the LORD all the days of the Apostles, and of the Elders that outlived the Apostles, which had known all the works of the LORD that He had done for them ; but from that time forward being unmindful of the Word of the LORD in His Apostles, the Church placed herself in connexion with the Imperial power, and sought the protection and guidance of the State. Judges ii. 7.

“ *Pergamos* ” signifies elevation, or lifting up, which very aptly represents the exaltation and honour to which the Church attained at this period. She became allied to, and united with the State, and was lifted up into temporal power by the Roman governors who had embraced Christianity, the first of whom was Con-

stantine. Theodosius is also mentioned as having conferred great honour upon the Church. Gibbon says, "Among the benefactors of the Church the fame of Constantine has been rivalled by the glory of Theodosius. If Constantine had the advantage of erecting the standard of the Cross, the emulation of his successor assumed the merit of subduing the Arian heresy, and of abolishing the worship of idols in the Roman world." The position in which the Church was now found was fraught with greater peril to her spiritual welfare than when she suffered persecution, and she now stood especially in need of admonition and rebuke. The Faithful Bishop, jealous over His flock, which He had purchased with His own blood, heads His Epistle to the angel of this church with these words :

*"These things saith He which hath the sword with two edges."* This description of our LORD is very different to the two preceding addresses in the Epistles to the churches of Ephesus and Smyrna. The former expresses pastoral watchfulness and security ; the latter, His ever-present power to give eternal life to His people, and to sustain them under persecutions. But in this He represents Himself as One ready to execute the power of His Word on the wicked and disobedient, unless they repented of their deeds. "The Word of the LORD is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder the soul and spirit, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." And that He might prepare them for it, He notices first those things which He approves as well as those which He condemns, that so they might know He used the sword in faithfulness and love.

Heb. iv. 12.



“I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is ; and thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied My faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.” In this commendation, we have an evident allusion to a previous period of persecution, and a martyr’s name is mentioned, which is found nowhere else in the history of the time. The LORD JESUS is styled in the prefatory vision to the Epistles, “The Faithful Martyr.” And here He speaks of Antipas in the same terms, “My faithful martyr.” What a dignity and honour are here put upon the spirit of witness-bearing and martyrdom, which had now well nigh departed from the Church ! A faithful witness is nothing less than a martyr entering on his course of imprisonment and death. But how many fail in the beginning of their witness, and attain not to the glory of this faithful testimony ! The Pergamos state of the Church is unfavourable to martyrdom. For it is one in which she is seduced by the flatteries of the world and the desires of the flesh. And such as follow these will not attain unto the prize of their high calling, nor win the martyr’s crown.

Regarding, then, this Epistle as prophetic of the spiritual condition of the Church in the period to which we are applying it, this allusion to Antipas as the LORD’s faithful martyr acquires a significance not otherwise seen ; and the name Antipas becomes descriptive of a class of faithful witnesses, or of that noble army of martyrs who gave themselves unto the death during the previous period of persecution which had just passed away.

The Church of Pergamos is also said “to dwell where Satan has his seat or throne.” Satan is called

“The prince of this world.” And when he offered all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them to the LORD, He did not question his power to give them. His seat or throne, therefore, must be in the high places of rule and government. And these words intimate, that Christian men were found at this period occupying the high places of power and authority in the government of the empire. The history of this time abundantly shows that such was indeed the case. The place of Satan’s throne, and habitation, was that into which the Church of Pergamos had come, and that not as a temporary abode, but as a permanent dwelling. What is here said of the Church under Constantine formed no part of her previous history. And as this is the first time in which she is described as dwelling where Satan dwelleth, and where his throne is, it is evident that this period is the time referred to.

But there are certain things for which the angel of the Church of Pergamos is particularly commended—“Thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied My faith.” Many are the names and titles given to our LORD. But the one to which our LORD here emphatically refers, is that name which the prophecy of this book particularly concerns, and which is written on its title page, and that name is “JESUS CHRIST.” And when we consider the import of these words, the mystery they contain, and the fundamental truths they set forth, we need not marvel at the importance attached to the holding of it fast. Whoso holdeth not this name hath not God ; does not know God ; holds no truth of God in its integrity ; but misconstrues all, and perverts all. It is that name which flesh and blood revealeth not unto us, but our FATHER which is in heaven : and which, as embodying and embracing all

truth, gives to this book its true character and designation, "*The Revelation of JESUS CHRIST.*" It is that name which comprehends both Godhead and Manhood. In it we perceive that He is "Immanuel,"—"God with us,"—God in our nature; that He is one with God, and one with us, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Although He be Man, yet is He very God—God and Man in One CHRIST. And the glory of His Godhead, the verity of His Manhood, and the truth and reality of His acts both as God and Man, are clearly revealed in the prophecies of this book. Here we are repeatedly shown, that having become Man, He has not ceased to be God, nor parted with, nor ceased to abide in, all that belongs essentially to God. His personal existence as God cannot vary: for the Godhead is incapable of change. And this being once admitted, we must equally admit that henceforth the same Divine Person is infinite and finite; always omniscient, and yet attaining knowledge by degrees, and ever acquiring it; everywhere present, and yet limited to the compass of a human body: for all these statements, however apparently opposed to each other, amount to no more than this—that He is perfect God and perfect Man; that in the person of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Godhead hath not been converted into manhood, but manhood hath been assumed into God; and that He is One CHRIST, not by confusion of substance but by unity of person. Verily, He hath a Name which is above every name! Vide Phil. ii. 9, 10. Well may we, in confessing our faith in HIM, bow down our heads in silent adoration, and pause for a while to contemplate the unfathomable mystery contained in the Name of JESUS CHRIST!

The Name which the angel is commended for holding

fast, is the same as that for which the Apostle suffered: for he was an exile at Patmos, "for the testimony of JESUS CHRIST." And the time when the Church is said especially not to deny this Name, is stated to have been in the days of martyrdom, even when Antipas was slain. It was for this Name that the Church had now so earnestly to contend. For it was at the time that controversy raged between the Arians and those who held the true faith concerning the person of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, which controversy caused the Emperor Constantine to assemble the first general council of the Church at Nice, to adjudicate upon this matter, which threatened to subvert even the foundations of the faith itself.

The idea of struggle and of victory is significantly expressed in the term "*holding fast*," (*κρατεῖς*.) For the Name of JESUS CHRIST being so subtilly denied by those who sided with Arius, it required great faith and confidence in God to overcome these enemies of the truth.

The LORD also says of the angel of this Church, "Thou hast not denied My *faith*." As the Name of JESUS CHRIST contains the mystery of the Incarnation, so His faith has special reference to the *work* of CHRIST in the flesh, and shows us that the holding fast of His Name is not merely to confess it in word only, but in deed and in truth. "The faith of JESUS CHRIST" is thus spoken of by S. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans—"The righteousness of GOD is manifested by faith of JESUS CHRIST, which is unto all and upon all that believe," (*διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*.) And in writing to the Galatians, he says, "I live by the faith of the SON of GOD, who loved me, and gave Himself for me," (*ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ*.) The same

Vide Rom.  
iii. 21, 22.

Gal. ii. 20.

Apostle tells us that we are made righteous by the faith of CHRIST, (διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ.) And that we have access into the presence of God by faith of Him, (διὰ πίστεως αὐτοῦ.) CHRIST lived by faith, and by faith He fulfilled all that was written of Him, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Those, therefore, who "hold fast His faith," are such as take up the Cross daily and follow Him. As He said to the angel, "Thou hast not denied *My faith*," so He also said, "I know thy *works*," and in no other way can the faith of JESUS CHRIST be manifested: for "faith without works is dead." The LORD JESUS having first commended the angel, proceeds next, tenderly, yet faithfully, to administer the word of rebuke.

Phil. iii. 9.

Eph. iii. 12.

S. James ii. 26.

"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou them also that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." These words direct us to the history and character of Balaam, whose covetousness prompted him to go, and fulfil, if possible, the desire of Balac, king of Moab, and curse the children of Israel. And after he had failed in this, he caused them by his counsel to trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor. For they were tempted to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab, and to sacrifice to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor; and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel. The application of Balaam's policy to this period of the Church is evident. The persecutions which arose after the death of the Apostles, and which continued throughout the Smyrna period of the Church, were the

Vide Num. xxii. &amp;c.

Num. xxxi. 14-16.

means of preventing the evils complained of in this Epistle ; for the sword and the stake are not the instruments of seduction. When, however, this period ended, and the Pergamos condition of the Church came in at the time of Constantine, Christian men began vainly to imagine that the Church and the world could be united, and through covetousness commended the unhallowed union. This evil condition is here represented by the doctrine of Balaam, whose error consisted in seeking after the honours and rewards of this world instead of being entirely devoted to God. And the antitype of his character was seen in those who made their spiritual standing subservient to the purposes of the state, by seeking to unite the temporal and spiritual rule in the hands of the same person, which union is called in Scripture language, spiritually—"fornication." In like manner "they eat things sacrificed unto idols," adopting a false Catholicity, which manifested itself by partaking of the idolatrous feasts with the old idolaters, regarding this as a part of their spiritual liberty, instead of coming out from among them, and being separate, and touching not the unclean thing.

Rev. xvii. 2.

The angel is also rebuked for permitting those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. Those who held these doctrines were in a much worse condition than those who held the doctrine of Balaam ; for they appear to have taught the Antichristian doctrine, that our flesh admits not of sanctification—that we cannot be holy and like CHRIST in this world. This was the root of the doctrines of the Nicolaitanes, which led them to sanction and indulge in all the lusts of the flesh, teaching, like our modern Antinomians, that it is a matter of indifference what manner of life a man

leads if he believes in CHRIST for the forgiveness of sin ! These are the things which the LORD hated, and the angel is solemnly admonished :

“ Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.” In the execution of this threatening, the angel would be smitten in them, just as a father is when his children are visited with sickness and death. And he is told if he fails to purify and cleanse his flock by a righteous and holy discipline, (which alone would be the true sign of repentance,) the LORD will come and fight against them with the sword of His mouth, even in His ordinances, and with that “ Word ” which they were so fearfully perverting, so that they should find no way of escape.

“ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.” Whilst the address of the Spirit to all the seven Churches, and to every one who hath an ear to hear, shows the Catholicity of the Epistles, that all persons at all times may be instructed and benefited thereby, the adaptation of the promise to the condition of the Church of Pergamos given in this Epistle, shows in its prophetic aspect its speciality in regard to the third period of the Christian age. We read in the Gospel by S. John, that when the Jews spake of the manna on which their fathers fed in the wilderness, as proving the Divine commission of Moses, JESUS said unto them, “ Moses gave you not that bread from heaven : but My FATHER giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He which

S. John vi.  
32.

Exod. xvi.  
33.

cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world. I AM that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven ; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever ; and the bread that I will give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Now of the manna on which the Israelites fed in the wilderness, a portion was taken and laid up in a golden pot, in the Ark of the Covenant within the Most Holy Place, hidden from the sight of men, and it corrupted not. As the manna, therefore, which fell round about the camp, signifies, as our LORD tells us, the substance of His flesh, given for the life of the world, so the incorruptible manna laid up in the secret place of the Most High, signifies the same substance of CHRIST's flesh, in that condition of immortality and incorruptibility, which it now possesses at the right hand of God. And the promise to those that overcome, that He will give them to eat of the hidden manna, conveys this spiritual truth, that they shall partake of His glorified humanity, and be made like unto Him when He shall come to be glorified in His saints.

2 Tim. ii. 19.

Mal. iii. 17,  
18.

The "white stone," promised to those that overcome, is given as a mark of *discrimination*, and as an assurance of the fulfilment of the promise ; as it is written, "The foundation of the LORD standeth sure, having this seal, the LORD knoweth them that are His." The prophet Malachi also speaks of that day when the LORD shall return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth Him not ; and they shall be



Mine, saith the LORD of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels ; and I will spare him as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. The "white stone," then, is emblematical of the righteousness and spotless purity of the saints, even of that righteousness and inward purity of heart and mind, unto which the faithful alone attain through the sanctifying power of the HOLY GHOST.

In this stone there is "a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." The new name is that which belongeth unto the SON of GOD, and is expressed in the prophecy of Isaiah by the word "Emmanuel," which signifies "GOD with us." And no man can truly know that name but he who receiveth it ; for it is not a mere doctrinal knowledge which is here spoken of, but that which is of the HOLY GHOST : "CHRIST in us the hope of glory : " or as it is written in another place, "I will dwell in them and walk in them."

This interpretation of the condition of the Pergamos church, as prophetic of the third period of the Christian age, will appear still more evident in our exposition of the civil phase, as revealed in the opening of

#### THE THIRD SEAL.

5 And when He had opened the third seal, I heard the third Rev. vi. 5, 6. beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse : and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny : and *see* thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

At the opening of this seal, the third living creature is heard to say, "Come and see." The third living

creature had a face as a man, which, as we have before observed, is emblematic of the Evangelist. And our attention being called to the things which are revealed under the seal, by one exercising the office of an evangelist, intimates that in this third period of the Christian age, the Church had declined still further from its original ordinances, and that at this time, the rule of the LORD was so little acknowledged in the Church, even in the ordinances then remaining for rule, that it became needful to bring in another element, even the rule of the State, in order to enforce obedience. For rule must be exercised in the Church of some kind or other, and therefore when the Church would not submit to the spiritual ordinances of the LORD, He was compelled to place her under the civil ruler, even as He delivered His people of old into the hand of the king of Babylon. And as Constantine was the first of those who exercised this power over the Church, the vision opens thus:—

“ And I beheld, and lo a black horse, and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.” The horse and his rider under each of the four seals are emblematical or descriptive of the empire as a corporate body, with its Head or chief Ruler. “Black” is the symbol of mourning and death, and this emblem shows that the period symbolized was a time of political sorrow and death, or in other words, of the decline and fall of the empire. The principles which bring dissolution had long been working among the people, and were now come into manifestation: for the glory of the Imperial rule was darkened, and about to depart. And the first act which proved fatal to the unity of the empire was wrought by Constantine, when he removed the imperial seat to Constantinople.

“He that sat on the horse had a pair of balances in his hand.” A reference to the Scriptures of the Old Testament will give us the true meaning of this emblem. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of the wisdom and power of God, asks—“Who hath weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?” Isa. xl. 12. implying by this metaphorical expression, the giving of the nations upon earth their relative influence and weight in relation to each other. So Daniel’s interpretation of Tekel—“Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting,” Dan. v. 27.—indicated not only the personal wickedness of the king of Babylon, but that his power and influence were no longer able to withstand the Persian armies which were then surrounding his city. The scales or “balances,” therefore, seen under this seal in the hand of the rider, represent the balancing of power which was then being felt throughout the empire, and indicate its division, which was seen in the removal of the imperial seat, and in the division which Constantine made in the empire.

The scales in the hand of him who sat upon the horse represent also, that the civil ruler had assumed to himself “The balances of the Sanctuary,” and was now sitting as supreme judge over the Church. And so history informs us, that from the time of Constantine, the emperors were the virtual arbitrators in all ecclesiastical matters. The first example of which was seen in the council of Nice, where Constantine sat as moderator, and endeavoured to settle the dispute between Alexander and Arius, and bring them to perfect agreement. From this time until the reign of Justinian, the emperor was generally appealed to as arbitrator between contending parties, that by him their differences might be adjusted.

“And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny, and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.” The Church having lost its fourfold ministry, no person bearing at this time the distinct appellation of their names, the voice is not here represented as coming from them, but as heard in the midst of them. “A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny.” “Wheat and barley” are symbols of the respective ministries of the Apostle and Evangelist, and they are used here to represent the dearth of those doctrines which had been delivered by Apostles at the first, and to show that the word of preaching was more manifest than that of sound doctrine, or in other words, that though the preaching of the word was general, the pure truth of God had greatly failed.

The “measure” being the daily allowance of a slave, and a “penny” the daily wages of a labourer, show that it was as much as Christian men could do to sustain their spiritual life, notwithstanding the outward prosperity of the Church. And that the knowledge and understanding of God’s Word were now to be dealt out by weight and measure, and subservient to the State. The command—“See that thou hurt not the oil and the wine,” intimates the protection which was now afforded to Christian men as such; and that the anointing of the Holy One which still remained with them, and the joy of spiritual life, reaching forth unto the kingdom, no longer subjected those who held and manifested these things to the persecution and oppression of their enemies. Christianity being adopted by the State, and finding a place in the Court and Palace of the Emperor, its profession was

counted honourable, and commended among men, so that they touched not the LORD's anointed, and did His prophets no harm.

The Ecclesiastical Phase of this period of Christian history is given us in the sounding of

### THE THIRD TRUMPET.

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from Rev. viii. 10. heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part <sup>11.</sup> of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters ;

11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood : and the third part of the waters became wormwood ; and many men died of the waters because they were made bitter.

This being the Ecclesiastical Phase of Christian history, the *star* seen in this vision is an emblem of a minister of CHRIST, and denotes a chief Pastor in a particular Church, exercising spiritual oversight and rule, according to the interpretation in the first chapter — “The stars are the Angels of the churches.” The natural “*heavens*” also are emblematical of the spiritual firmament in which the LORD has set His angels (stars) to rule during the night of this dispensation until the morning of the resurrection, and “He Ps. cxlvii. 1 calleth them all by their names.” The prophetic declarations of the nineteenth Psalm are so applied by S. Paul, wherein it is said, “The heavens declare the Rom. x. 18. glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world.” The word “*heaven*” is so ap-

- plied in this book,—“A door was opened in heaven.”
- Rev. iv. 1. “A wonder in heaven.” “War in heaven.” “The  
 Rev. xii. tail of the dragon drew the third part of the stars in  
 heaven.” “*Lamps*” were used in the tabernacle and  
 subsequently in the temple. There were seven in the  
 Holy Place to give light over against the table of shew-  
 bread. And the same emblem in the prefatory vision  
 to the Epistles is said to represent the seven churches.  
 “*A star*,” therefore, “falling from *heaven*, burning as  
 it were a *lamp*,” evidently means a minister of the  
 Sanctuary, a Bishop or Angel of the Church. Before  
 we apply the symbol to the history to which it refers,  
 we shall do well to notice the meaning of “*Rivers*,”  
 and “*fountains of waters*,” in their symbolic meaning.  
 The first mention made of a “*River*” is in Genesis ii.  
 where we read,—“A river went out of Eden to water  
 the garden, and from thence it was parted and became  
 into four heads.” These, as we shall have occasion to  
 show in interpreting the sixth vial, are emblematical of  
 ministers in the Church of CHRIST, affording spiritual  
 strength and consolation to His people. Hence David  
 Ps. l. 2. compares the righteous man, to “a tree planted by  
 the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in  
 his season.” And in the forty-sixth Psalm, where  
 he contrasts the river with the roaring waters  
 Ps. xlv. 4. of the troubled sea, he says,—“There is a river the  
 streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the  
 holy place of the Tabernacles of the Most High.”  
 Our LORD also compares the blessings which should  
 flow through the Church, through the gift of the HOLY  
 GHOST, to “*Rivers of living water*.” Moreover, God  
 S. John vii. 37–39. speaks of Himself as “*The Fountain of living water*.”  
 Jer. ii. 13. Zechariah speaks of a day “when there shall be a foun-  
 Zec. xiii. 1. tain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabi-

tants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness." The Prophet Joel says, "A fountain shall come forth of Joel iii. 18. the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim." And in Rev. vii. it is said "The Lamb shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." As a fountain, properly speaking, is the source or spring-head of waters, "*Fountains of waters*," when applied to the Church, must mean the chief sources or means of instruction and blessing.

Such then being the meaning of the emblems revealed by this trumpet, we are naturally led to apply their fulfilment to that well known and remarkable event of this period recorded of Arius, a Presbyter of Alexandria. His standing, was that of "a *star*" in the spiritual firmament of heaven. And the historical account of his abilities, and powerful influence, show him to have been one of considerable magnitude, and fully justifies the expression,—"*A great star*." The fearful fall of Arius from his spiritual and orthodox standing in the Church, into the deadly and soul-destroying heresy of denying the true Divinity of our LORD, is aptly represented by the "star falling from *heaven*." The falling star resembling a "*burning lamp*," is another or additional indication of his office in the Church, and may regard also the powerful eloquence for which he was famed, and by which he prevailed so effectually to mislead others, as well as the zeal he manifested in the propagation of his heresies. We may call him an arch-heretic by way of pre-eminence; for as he fell from a high eminence, so did he become a most powerful and influential heretic, and there is no event in the history of this period which so much affected the ecclesiastical polity of the Church.

The “star fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters.” Arius commenced the propagation of his heresy in the controversy which he held with Alexander, his Bishop, concerning the nature and dignity of the Son of God. His heresy soon spread far and wide, infecting many of the leading ministers of the Church, the Bishops and Pastors of CHRIST’s flock who had been ordained to be the sources of instruction—fountains and rivers in God’s heritage, whose streams should make glad the city of God—but who being now corrupted by the foul doctrine of Arius, the whole Church was in danger of being infected by it.

“And the name of the star is called Wormwood; and the third part of the waters became wormwood, and many men died of the waters because they were made bitter.” Wormwood is first mentioned in Deuteronomy xxix. 18, where it is spoken of metaphorically with reference to a people turning away their heart from the LORD, who are compared “to a root bearing gall and wormwood.” In the book of Proverbs v. 2, 3, 4, it is also written, “My son, let thy lips keep knowledge: for the lips of a strange woman drop as a honeycomb, and her mouth is smother than oil; but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.” In Jeremiah ix. 13—15, the LORD speaketh thus—“Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice, neither walked therein, but have walked after the imagination of their own hearts, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them; therefore thus saith the LORD of Hosts the God of Israel, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.” The prophet Amos ex-



horteth those "who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth," to "seek Him Amos v. 7, 8. that maketh the seven stars." It is instructive to observe in all these passages, that wormwood is used symbolically to represent the bitter consequences of departing from God, and from His truth, and we cannot fail to see how strikingly this symbolic language of the Old Testament is made to illustrate the bitter effects of the deadly heresy of Arius, vitiating the teaching and poisoning the sources of instruction—the rivers and fountains of waters—many Presbyters and Bishops having entertained it. It is remarkable that in the prophecy of Amos, it is said that "those who turned judgment to wormwood, and forsake righteousness, should seek unto Him that maketh the seven stars," which might have served as excellent counsel to those Bishops and Presbyters, who so fearfully perverted judgment and righteousness, in adopting the heresy of the fallen *star*—Arius. And the prophet's words as plainly show where the strength and safety of the Church lie; even in HIM Who maketh the seven stars, and holdeth them in His right hand—even in HIM whom Arius denied.

"And many men died of the waters because they were made bitter." The Arian heresy not only polluted the sources of spiritual instruction, but poisoned them, causing them to convey death instead of life to the people. He Who is the life, was denied to be the fountain of life, and therefore as many as drank of the waters died a spiritual death. And had not He Who maketh the seven stars, raised up Athanasius as a mighty opponent to this deadly heresy, we know not how far it might have prevailed; but by God's mercy

it was restrained to "the third part of the rivers and fountains of waters."

We may gather from the evils complained of in the Epistle, and the elevation of the Church by the Civil power into a fleshly or carnal standing, that there existed a predisposition among the baptized to receive the infusion of this heresy, the effects of which were manifested in the polity of the Church. To complete the history of this period there remains the judicial phase revealed in

### THE THIRD VIAL.

Rev. xvi. 4—  
7.      4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

5 And I heard THE ANGEL of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O LORD, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus.

6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

7 And I heard another angel out of the altar say, Even so, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, true and righteous *are* Thy judgments.

"The rivers and fountains of waters," upon which this vial of wrath is poured out, are the same as those described under the trumpet-phase, which were polluted by the Arian Wormwood. These became "*blood.*" The judgment here expressed appears to be the infliction of spiritual death upon those who taught and advocated the Arian heresy. This was an awful visitation which the sins of these men brought down upon them. Surely there is nothing so awful as spiritual death. For it cuts men off from communion and fellowship with God, and from CHRIST, Who only hath immortality and eternal life. It delivers men over to the second death, even to the worm that never

dieth, and to the fire which shall never be quenched. Terrible as was the infliction of this wrath of God, He is justified in the act:—

“And I heard the Angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O LORD, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus.” The SON of GOD—The Word which was in the beginning with God and was God, is often called by the name of Angel. The benediction of Israel on Joseph and his sons, was pronounced in this name—“The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.” The angel which appeared to Moses in the bush, and spake to him on Mount Sinai, was JEHOVAH—the I AM. The prophet Malachi speaks of HIM as “THE ANGEL of the covenant.” He is here called “THE ANGEL of the waters,” as the fountain and source of all life, and as the guardian and defender of the Word of life in the Church. This title of THE ANGEL of the waters, which unquestionably refers to the SON of GOD, as the Author and Giver of eternal life, and as being one with the FATHER, from whom the Spirit of life proceeds, is peculiarly appropriate to this vial, for it is poured out upon a people who have denied His Name, and renounced their faith in His Divinity, inasmuch as they taught that He was not co-equal and co-eternal with the FATHER—not truly and properly God.

And HE—THE ANGEL of the waters, and of the everlasting covenant, presiding over His Church, declares the *righteousness* of God in the judgment which the out-pouring of this vial inflicts, saying—“Thou art righteous, O LORD, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.” Here

Gen. xlviii.  
16.

Acts vii. 30—  
38.

Mal. iii. 1.  
(Heb.)

S. John v.  
21—27.

is an allusion to a previous persecution of the saints of the same kind as mentioned in the Epistle, and which appears to mark a synchronism between the Epistle and Vial, in like manner as the synchronism between the Trumpet and Vial appears to be marked by the use of the same symbols. Those who advocated the heresy of Arius were such as held not fast the Name of CHRIST, and persecuted those that did; they had shed the blood of prophets, among whom was Antipas, the LORD's faithful martyr; they at least acquiesced in their deeds, professing and manifesting the same spirit of bloody persecution; and being instrumental in destroying the lives of the saints, and of spreading spiritual death by their heretical doctrine, this judgment came upon them, "God gave them blood to drink, because they were worthy." The symbol of "*blood*" appears to be here used both literally and in a spiritual sense, after the same manner as the word "dead," when the LORD said, "Let the dead bury the dead."

"And I heard another angel out of the altar say, Even so, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, true and righteous are Thy judgments." In the midst of this wide-spread heresy, there still existed a number of the LORD's faithful servants, who ministered at the Altar, abiding steadfast in the faith of CHRIST, and who solemnly responded to His Word: for having preserved their doctrines uncorrupt, they fully acquiesced, and rejoiced in the true and righteous judgments of the LORD upon their apostate brethren.

## PART IX.

THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA. THE FOURTH  
SEAL. THE FOURTH TRUMPET. THE FOURTH VIAL.

As we proceed in our interpretation, it appears more and more evident, that each series of this fourfold form of prophecy is designed to point out to us successive periods of the Christian age. And we have already seen that each Epistle not only reveals a new era, but serves is the key to the other forms of prophecy: the spiritual being the true source from whence the outward derives its motives and action; even as man's life and conduct in the world are the result of his spiritual condition, whether it be good or evil. For which reason we are first directed to the spiritual phase as revealed in

### THE FOURTH EPISTLE.

18 And unto the angel of the Church in Thyatira write: These <sup>Rev. ii. 18—29.</sup> things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass:

19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last *to be* more than the first.

20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication: and she repented not.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit

adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with death ; and all the Churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts : and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak ; I will put upon you none other burden.

25 But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come.

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations :

27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers : even as I received of My FATHER.

28 And I will give him the morning star.

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

Thyatira (Θυάτειρα) signifies perfume, or sacrifice of labour. The name is remarkably descriptive of the condition of the Church at this period of her history here represented, which was particularly distinguished by that of *works*. Twice over does the Chief Shepherd commend His angel for his works. Those who had fallen into error, He commands to repent of their works, declaring that He will render unto every man according to his *works*. And finally, the promise of the LORD is made to him that overcometh and keepeth his *works* unto the end.

“ These things saith the SON of GOD, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass.” This title of our LORD in the Epistle to Thyatira, is no less instructive than the name of the Church to which it is addressed, and peculiarly applicable to its condition. It is the first and only place in this book, in which our LORD is designated “ *The SON of GOD.*” And it should seem to be introduced

here in reference to His Melchisedec Priesthood, as it is written in the second Psalm, "I will declare the decree, the LORD hath said unto Me, Thou art My SON, this day have I begotten Thee." That this relates to the Melchisedec priesthood is evident from the words of S. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews, where he says, "So also CHRIST glorified not Himself <sup>Heb. v. 5.</sup> to be made an High Priest, but He that said unto Him, Thou art My SON, this day have I begotten Thee." And contrasting the call of persons to the Priesthood under the law, with the Melchisedec priesthood of CHRIST, he says, "For the law maketh men high priests which <sup>Heb. vii. 28.</sup> have infirmity, but the word of the oath maketh the SON, who is consecrated for evermore." The symbols associated with this name in relation to His Priesthood after the order of Melchisedec, give a distinctiveness to the peculiar actions which as the SON of GOD He is coming to accomplish. As the priests under the law looked not only on the outward appearance of the sacrifice, but inspected the inward parts; so the SON of GOD informed the angel of the Church of Thyatira, that He took cognizance not merely of the outward works in which that Church abounded, but also of their *spiritual* condition; of the secret principles and hidden motives; for "He searcheth the heart and trieth the reins." "His eyes like unto a flame of fire" represent the office of CHRIST, in His ordinances, as searching out and detecting iniquity, by the presence of the HOLY GHOST. And "fire" being the emblem of love, shows that it is in the way of love He does search out and detect all evil: for the way of judgment is to let men have their own way, and to take their own course, which leads them to destruction. So also "His feet like unto fine brass as if they burned

in a furnace" exhibit the labour and travail of CHRIST, in proclaiming His salvation by men especially appointed by Him, and who, through their faithfulness and zeal, are brought into that affliction and trial, expressed by the burning as in a furnace. These emblems being used especially in reference to what may be termed the Papal period, afforded an intimation to the Church at that time, that she was failing in the manifestation of those attributes which belong unto Him as the Shepherd and Bishop of His Church ; although, doubtless, they were recognized to a certain extent among that class to whom the commendation in this Epistle will apply ; and it was in imitation of a substitution for which, the Bishop of Rome assumed an infallible guidance, as well as all the attributes of power, whereby he might gather all people to himself.

It would appear from the name of "*The Son of God*," and the emblems associated with it, that the evils existing in the Church of Thyatira, notwithstanding the works for which it was famed, were greater than those of Pergamos ; that the Church had declined more and more from the truth, and had gone further into apostacy. And this is indeed confirmed by the following statements made in the Epistle. For the LORD having acknowledged "the works of charity" of the Church of Thyatira, "and her service and faith, and patience, and works, and the last to be more than the first," says, "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." In the Church of Pergamos heretical principles and doctrines were



taught, ensnaring and leading captive individuals ; but here the evil assumes a decided form, and that too of such magnitude, that a remnant only escapes the seductions of the enemy. In the beginning of the age, the Church was represented by the symbol of "a woman clothed with the sun, having on her head a crown of twelve stars, and the moon under her feet." But in the Church of Thyatira, a woman, whose name in all Scripture is held up to infamy and contempt, is allowed to have the pre-eminence—"that woman Jezebel." This being a typical name, and derived from the Old Testament, the angel would at once perceive from the history there recorded of her, the nature and extent of the evil which the SON OF GOD beheld working in the Church. Jezebel was wife of Ahab, <sup>1 Kings xvi. 31.</sup> king of Israel, a daughter of a Sidonian king, and she brought with her the idolatries of her father's house, particularly the worship of *Asteroth, or the moon*, <sup>Asteroth was represented by "the moon and seven stars," not unfrequently engraved on gems. (Calmet.)</sup> which she established in Israel, as well as the worship of Baal. She also persecuted unto death the prophets of the LORD, and gained such an ascendancy over Israel, that the worship of the true God appeared to be well nigh extinct. The religion of Jezebel was that only which received the sanction of the State. And of Ahab's idolatry, to which he was tempted of Jezebel, it is written, "There was none like unto Ahab, which <sup>1 Kings xxi. 25.</sup> did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." The evils which prevailed in the Church of Thyatira being personified by this wicked woman Jezebel, sufficiently indicates that that Church had gone further into apostacy than that of Pergamos. Therefore, without enlarging on the history of this Church, we will proceed to show its prophetic aspect, in relation to the fourth

period of the Christian age. As the prophecy of the former period revealed the history of Christendom when the Church became allied to the State, and lifted up by the secular power, so this gives the history of Christendom when she came into the condition of a "*harlot*," commencing with that act of Justinian, who gave supreme and unlimited authority in the Church to one man—the Bishop of Rome. During the former period, the declension of the Church was manifested in her union with the State, or exaltation by the civil power; but under the present period, she assumes to herself the power of the kingdom, even as Jezebel performed the acts of the king in the king's name, and by his power, moving and influencing him to every species of oppression and idolatry. Thus did the

Rev. xvii. 2. Church commit spiritual fornication with the kings of the earth. From that time forth she became manifestly idolatrous, and brought into her services heathen practices and customs. And at length the Church itself was idolized, and exalted in its authority above *the Son of God*, which spiritual wickedness was expressed, though perhaps unwittingly, by exalting the Virgin Mary above the *LORD*. Thus as Jezebel worshipped the *moon*, so did the people worship the *Church*. In like manner also did the Church of Rome persecute unto death the faithful servants of *CHRIST*, killing the prophets, and quenching the light of the Spirit.

"And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not." This intimates she had received warning, and that God in His long suffering waited to see if she would turn from her evil ways. And we know that the Church of Rome had many and ample testimonies given her by faithful men, whom

God raised up to testify of her wickedness, whom she slew for their testimony, until her tribulation commenced in the time of the Reformation, when God raised up another band of noble confessors to witness against her, if haply, she might repent and turn unto the LORD—but she repented not. Therefore the LORD said :

“ Behold I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds ; and I will kill her children with death, and all the Churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts ; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.” The “ *bed* ” into which she is cast, is that of carnal rest and security—spiritual sleep and death—a condition which allows of no remonstrances, or change of any kind ; and such was the condition which she sealed upon herself in the Council of Trent. Not regarding the Voice of the Son of God, through His faithful messengers, she was given up of God, and permitted to take such measures as rendered her state irremediable. “ The kings of the earth which committed adultery with her,” were also cast into great tribulation and suffering ; as they have drunk of the cup of her fornications, so have they been made to feel the rod of His indignation, being driven from their thrones by the power of the people, or by invading armies. Such is the *bed* into which the idolatrous Church, or Papal harlot has been cast ; and so fearful is her state, that even her children, or those who cleave unto her, are threatened with death. If men will adhere to a system which excludes the Sovereignty of the Son of God, and sets at nought His counsel, they must perish. The judgments which rest upon

them are also declared to be of such a character—such an exposure of sin—that “all the Churches shall know that the Son of God searcheth the heart and trieth the reins.” The idolaters shall be rewarded, every one of them, according to their *works*. The works for which the angel is commended were acceptable in the sight of God, but the works of Jezebel were works of darkness.

Vide the  
Book of Re-  
velation, in  
Greek, &c.,  
by Samuel  
Prideaux  
Tregelles.

“But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira,” or “unto you, the rest that are in Thyatira, I say,” (as the text may be rendered on the authority of the best manuscripts,) as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan as they speak, I will put upon you none other burden; but that which thou hast already, hold fast till I come.” The promise here given is unto the faithful *remnant*,—“to you who are left,”—who have kept yourselves from the seducer, though worshipping in the midst of an idolatrous Church. The passage may be rendered—“Unto you, even the remaining ones who are in Thyatira.” There is no hope held out to the Church of Thyatira, as a body, but to individuals only—the Saints in Thyatira, who shall preserve their faith unto the end. As there was a remnant preserved during the dominion of the typical Jezebel, “even all who had not bowed the knee to Baal,” even so should it be in Thyatira. It deserves particular notice, that Thyatira is reduced to this remnant, not from the departure of those who fall away from the visible Church, herself abiding faithful, but by the apostacy of that visible Church itself, otherwise the address would have been, not to the several persons remaining faithful, but to the angel of the Church, however small his flock might have been. “The rest who have

not this doctrine," that is, the doctrine of Rome ; "and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak," that is, who have not been one with her in her abominations ; who have not embraced or adopted her errors ; (and every error she has held appears to have been the perversion of some Catholic doctrine, whereby the truth of God has been turned into a lie,) "upon such will I put none other burden, but the holding fast of that which they have till I come." The burden which the remnant is to bear, is the maintenance of CHRIST's testimony and patience, doing the works of CHRIST, in the midst of the perversion of all truth, and the oppressive domination of the spirit of Antichrist. The LORD JESUS does not require more than this, that they be faithful over what they have known of His truth ; and that they hold this fast until He come. Here again we must remark that this is enjoined on them as individuals, the truth as it is in CHRIST JESUS not being held by the visible Church, but by the faithful remnant. And the words, "Until I come," set before them the blessed hope of CHRIST's appearing, when they, having held fast what they had, shall exercise dominion with Him.

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I have received of My FATHER." The works for which the angel is commended are the works of CHRIST, as proper to His Church, in contradistinction to those which were of men. The commendation is peculiarly appropriate to this Epistle to the Church of Thyatira, which concerneth *works*, both good and evil ; thereby distinguishing the righteous from the wicked,

and revealing also the righteousness of God in His dealings towards them. The true servants of JESUS CHRIST are distinguished at this period by patient endurance under oppression, in fulfilling the works of CHRIST, whilst the Church, as a body or community, is doing the works of Jezebel, the Papal harlot. Hence the peculiarity in the conditions concerning the promises. In all the other Epistles, the condition necessary to inherit the promises is—"he that overcometh;" but in this it is added, "and keepeth My works unto the end." The works for which the angel is commended are doubtless the works of CHRIST, as proper to His Church, which the faithful remnant is encouraged to hold fast till He come. In contradistinction to the works of the mystic Jezebel, they have the honourable appellation of "*My* works," and they stand in the Epistle in contrast with *their* works, of which they are called to repent.

The suitableness also of the promises in this Epistle is no less remarkable than in the preceding, whether regarded in the historical or prophetic aspect presented to us. The Papacy assumed in its government, both temporal and spiritual dominion, and in the exercise of both, brought in the iron rule of the flesh, having fearfully usurped and perverted the rule of CHRIST. And to those who were not seduced by these depths of Satan, but who resist and overcome, keeping the works of CHRIST, it is promised that they shall exercise dominion with Him over the nations at the period of His Advent.

The "rod of iron" is not the sceptre of CHRIST's kingdom, but is emblematical of that power which the LORD will use to break in pieces the oppressor, who shall be beaten, as it were, with his own rod, and

dashed in pieces by the works of his own hands, through the Omnipotent power, and overruling, overmastering Providence of the SON of GOD. And, as a *foreshadowing* of this event, it is not a little remarkable, that whilst the principles developed at the Revolution of 1793, have wrought to the destruction of existing constitutions, the men who advocated them have not been able to build up again, to restore, or make whole anything. The "iron rod" has in a manner been doing its work among the nations, dashing the vessels to shivers, and no power on earth can restore them. But this is by way of application only, as foreshadowing its fulfilment. The promise has especial reference to the infliction of the judgments of the LORD upon the Antichrist of the last time, when those who escape his power by translation, shall be with the LORD, in the breaking of the nations, and shall come out of heaven with Him to the destruction of the beast and the false prophet.

"Even as I have received of My FATHER." Here is evident allusion to the prophetic declarations of the second Psalm, where it is said, "THOU shalt break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Whereupon there follow immediately these admonitory words, "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings, be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the SON, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." This seems very much like the call to repentance in the Epistle on the one hand, and the promise made to those who overcome and hold fast what they have on the other.

“And I will give him the morning star.” The Papacy having forestalled the kingdom, and perverted the rule of CHRIST by its works, the hope of the kingdom was set aside: for that blessed hope was felt to be incompatible with the pretensions of the Romish Church. The works of CHRIST, and those of Jezebel, could not coalesce, and the former were only held by a remnant, and to that faithful few the promise was made. To every one who should overcome, it is said, “I will give him the morning star.” We are not at a loss to know what this means: for CHRIST says, “I am the bright and morning star.” And S. Peter tells us, that we do well to take heed unto “the sure word of prophecy,” “until the day dawn and the day-star arise in our hearts.” And he mentions this in relation to the LORD’s appearing and kingdom, which he would have us always to keep in remembrance. Therefore, the giving of the *star* to the faithful, implies in the first place, that CHRIST should be in them the hope of glory. Secondly, that they should behold it when it appears in the spiritual firmament of heaven as the harbinger of coming day. And, thirdly, that they should partake of His glory when He cometh. The giving of the morning star entitles them to “the resurrection from the dead,” that is, the FIRST resurrection, and shows that when CHRIST, Who is their life, shall appear, they shall appear with Him in glory.

How appropriate are these promises to the faithful in Thyatira! And how clearly does this Epistle show the spiritual aspect of the Church in the period we are considering. And whilst its speciality is so fully and distinctly defined, we are reminded of its Catholicity, and the responsibility of every member of CHRIST’S

Rev. xxii.  
16.

2 S. Pet. i.  
19.



Church in these words, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Having opened the spiritual phase of this period, we are prepared for the consideration of its civil aspect, given in the opening of

### THE FOURTH SEAL.

7 And when He had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice Rev. vi. 7, 8. of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him: and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

This seal being opened, S. John informs us that he heard the voice of the fourth living creature, saying, "Come and see." The fourth living creature was like a flying eagle, which is emblematical of the prophetic ministry. Each of "the living creatures" at the opening of the three preceding seals is heard to say, "Come and see," but in the opening of this fourth seal, we have the additional words of the *voice* of the living creature, showing that it is the prophet's ministry here referred to, because prophesying is emphatically a voice. Thus the prophet who was sent to prepare the way of the LORD, said, "I am *the Voice* of one crying in the wilderness." So that as the voice of thunder in the case of the first living creature marked the Apostolic, so this voice marks the Prophetic ministry, and confirms the view we have taken of the order of these emblems. S. Matt. iii 3; S. John i. 23.

Attention being thus called to the events disclosed under this seal by this ministry, indicates that the time of their fulfilment is during the Papal period, for at

the time here referred to, the Emperor Justinian, by a decree of the State, gave to the Bishop of Rome a spiritual supremacy over all the Churches, so that he assumed to be not only the head of the Church upon earth, but the infallible interpreter of God's Holy Word, and revealer of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. This exactly coincides with the spiritual phase, given in the Epistle, one charge brought against the angel of Thyatira being, "Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a *prophetess*, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication." At the time here referred to, men were constrained under the severe penalties of excommunication, to receive the light thus given from her mouth as from God. Through the instrumentality of the civil power, this mystery of iniquity assumed to itself the prophetic function, which should have been only exercised by the living ordinances of God in His Church, and so foreshadowed the Antichrist who shall exalt himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped.

The "*pale horse*" represents the empire in a state of *dissolution* when compared with its previous prospects. The word used (ἵππος χλωρὸς) is significant of the colour which the earth presents when the green grass is burnt up, a *livid* green, the colour of corruption. The symbol, therefore, is very appropriate, in relation to the appearance of decay which at this time was manifested in the government of the Roman empire, every vestige of whose imperial rule was being swept away under Justinian.

And the name of him that sat on the horse being called *Death*, shows that at this time the imperial power had become extinct save only in name; death being written, as it were, upon every civil institution, as to

the form and power in which they had previously existed. "*Hell*," or Hades, following him, reveals the extraordinary sacrifice of human life during this fourth period of the Christian age, extending from the time of Justinian to the Reformation. This calamity fell principally upon the western division of the Roman empire, on one of the four præfectures into which the Roman empire had been divided by Constantine.

"There were two præfectures before the time of Constantine, who, when he made Constantinople the seat of empire, appointed four: 1st, of the East; 2nd, of Illyricum; 3rd, of Italy; 4th, of Gaul. After the division of the empire into East and West, the first two were under the Eastern emperors, the last two under the Western; but the Western provinces being overrun with barbarians, in the reign of Valentinian III., the two Western præfects ceased to be appointed. Justinian recovered Africa, A.D. 528, and reconstituted that præfecture; and when he soon after drove out the barbarians from Italy, it was placed under the same jurisdiction; and thus, what was originally called the Italian, became now the African præfecture, and being the only one then existing, answers well to *the fourth part of the earth*."

Morning  
Watch, v. i.  
549.

The four forms in which men were destroyed, were "with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth;" that is, with *war*, the sword being the emblem of that scourge; with *famine*, of which hunger is the symbol; with *tyranny*, "death" being the indication of an entire loss or destruction of civil power; and by the *lawless oppression* of petty rulers, symbolized by "the beasts of the earth." The history of this period affords a true comment on this prophecy. So fearfully desolating were these plagues

with which the Roman earth was visited at this time, that it is said no less than one hundred millions of the human race were exterminated during the reign of Justinian.

We may also observe, in addition to the above remarks on this prophecy, that this act of the emperor in lifting up the Bishop of Rome into the seat of universal Episcopal supremacy, indicated that there was no longer any power in the State to hold the balances of the sanctuary, or to decide in ecclesiastical matters. This power was from henceforth committed to the Pope, and of this act it may be truly said, that "Death and Hades followed" in its train. For under this supremacy multitudes of people were put to death; and many of the saints of the Most High suffered in the bitterest form the cruelty of man could invent; consigning them first to an ignominious death, and then to the pains of purgatory in the separate or disembodied state. So that these emblems aptly represent the dreadful evils, both spiritual and temporal, which took place during this period.

The ecclesiastical phase of this period of Christian history is given us in

#### THE FOURTH TRUMPET.

Rev. viii. 12,  
13.

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound.

This trumpet as representing the ecclesiastical phase

of this fourth period, commences with great *darkness* upon the Church, occasioned by the obscuring of the luminaries in the spiritual firmament of heaven. "The third part of the sun, and of the moon, and of the stars was smitten." These emblems represent the ministry of the Church in its threefold aspect of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. The Bishops are for rule: and the LORD has ruled by them according to their measure as the Sun of Righteousness. The stars are the chief ministers of particular churches and the Deacons are the heads of the people or church as a body, which is put under the figure of the moon. And this obscuration of these spiritual signs was effected by the lifting up of the Bishop of Rome to be the sole judge in ecclesiastical matters." The LORD JESUS, as the Sun of Righteousness, is the fountain and source of every blessing. Of His fulness the Church received at the beginning through Apostles and a four-fold ministry. When however the Church came into spiritual captivity to the civil ruler, and, in the place of those four ministries acknowledged only the three orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; as there was an evident departure from the original constitution of the Church, so failure and disappointment were continually the result. But when the Bishop of Rome was lifted up out of his place and assumed those attributes which belong unto CHRIST alone, and which can be only legitimately exercised through His true and proper ministries, the *light* of the Church necessarily became more obscured: and the life of God which flowed through the ordinances of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, according to their measure, became more oppressed. And as all ministry in the Church was divided into these three parts, there was an obscura-

Eph. iv.

tion of each, wherever the claims and principles of Rome were admitted. As when the dragon drew the third part of the stars of heaven, or chief ministers, and cast them to the earth, they ceased to enlighten, and to guide the feet of men into the way of peace, so many of those and other ministers of the Church here represented, have fallen into the same snare, and lost their spiritual light and perception of the truth of God in consequence of it.

Regarding also the Church as a whole, this trumpet phase applies especially to the mystery of iniquity in the Church of Rome, as distinguished from the Greek and Protestant churches. And the darkening of its ordinances, represented by the darkening of the third part of the sun and moon and stars, brought in that spiritual darkness which prevailed during the period emphatically called the dark ages.

“And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying, with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound.” We previously remarked, and shall have occasion to remark further in our interpretations of the prophecies of this book, that the symbol of the angel flying through the midst of heaven represents an universal ministry. The character of that ministry in the vision before us is one of woe, foreboding trouble and distress—the harbinger of great evil, conveying the announcement of a triple woe, which covers the remaining period of the Christian age. Towards the termination of the Papal period, and previous to the separation of Luther from the Church of Rome, such a ministry as the one here referred to did actually take place, and the whole

Church was convulsed by the agonizing throes of the Reformation. Men, mighty in spirit, and loving not their lives unto the death, stood up to protest against the corruptions of the papacy, and to contend in deadly strife against its power. These contentions stirred up among the masses of the people those elements of evil, which ecclesiastically considered, have produced little else than woe in the Christian Church, and will so continue to do until He shall appear, "Who shall sit as a Refiner and Purifier of silver: Mal. iii. 2, 3. and Who shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness."

That which next claims our attention is the judicial phase of this period as revealed in the outpouring of

#### THE FOURTH VIAL.

8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and Rev. xvi. 8, 9. power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the Name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give Him glory.

"Heat" is an emblem often used in the Holy Scripture to denote God's wrath. Isaiah says, "Be- Isa. xxx. 27. hold the Name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with His anger." Moses proclaiming the judgments which should come upon Israel through their rebellion, says, "Even all nations shall say, Wherefore Deut. xxix. 24-27. hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the Covenant of the LORD GOD of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them forth out

S. Mark iv.  
5, 6, and 16,  
17.

of the land of Egypt. For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom He had not given unto them : and the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book." But the true symbolism of this vial is unfolded by our LORD in the parable of the sower. In describing the four different kinds of ground in which the seed was sown, He says, "Some fell on stony ground where it had not much earth ; and immediately it sprung up, because it had no depth of earth ; but when *the sun was up it was scorched* ; and because it had no root it withered away." This scorching of the sun, our LORD interprets to be "*persecution for the word's sake.*" This vial, therefore, represents the oppression and persecution of the ruling power during the Papal domination. The same symbol being adopted which is used in the trumpet phase, is one of those many synchronisms which often occur in this book, and in the present instance it identifies the action of the trumpet and the vial, as taking place during the same period. The reason why a third part of the sun is not mentioned, as in the trumpet, appears to be, that the rule of this spiritual usurpation was universal in its influence, though its effects were only manifested when it was resisted. Had this rule been of the character which the Church ought to exercise, no persecution or scorching could have taken place within her, under any circumstances. Moreover, whilst the resistance made to the assumptions of Rome by the people of God, who testified against them, bearing witness unto the LORD, as the only true and universal Bishop of the Church, brought down only upon them the indignation of the Ruler ; still, the



rule of Satan cannot be otherwise than oppressive even upon the willing slaves of his power. And that there were many such during this period, upon whom this vial of God's wrath was poured out, is evident from their impenitence, and blasphemy against God. For it is said, "They blasphemed the Name of God which had power over these plagues : and they repented not to give Him glory." The *Name* of God being especially spoken of as having power over these plagues, directs us also to this period of the Church's history as that in which this vial of God's wrath was poured out : for as the Pope arrogated to himself, not only the title of universal Bishop and head of all the churches, but the very *name* of God, the judgment of God was the fruit or consequence of ascribing those attributes to man which belong unto the LORD alone. This sin was soon made manifest, and felt by the fearful consequences which followed, God in His infinite wisdom and power causing it to work its own punishment. The Name of God having power over these plagues, intimates also the deliverance of those who *confessed* His Name, and were preserved through their testimony from the plagues of this vial. For though they suffered persecution from the ruling power in consequence of the faith they manifested in His Name, their souls were preserved and kept from all evil, and the suffering by which their faith was tried as by fire, wrought out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. And though there shall arise a more terrible persecution of the saints when THE Antichrist, "Lucifer, son of the morning," shall be revealed, who will exalt himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, yet the time cometh when it shall be said of them, "They shall hunger no more,

neither thirst any more ; *neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat* : For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters : and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

## PART X.

THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN SARDIS. THE FIFTH SEAL.  
THE FIFTH TRUMPET. THE FIFTH VIAL.

THIS period of Christian history embraces the events of the *Reformation*. We have seen from these prophecies, that the Church had scarcely been formed, when men began to decline from the faith and works of CHRIST. And as it must be admitted, that when first principles are departed from, every step taken in that direction must lead us further from the mind and will of GOD, it is evident that however zealous men may be for the truth, and however earnestly they may desire the welfare of the Church, failure and disappointment will attend every effort that is made to build it up, unless it be in the way of the LORD, and according to the original design or pattern given by Him. If we have departed from the mind and way of the LORD, no true or efficient reformation can be wrought unless we go back to the original pattern and structure of CHRIST'S Church, and begin at the beginning. However praiseworthy, therefore, the efforts made by those devoted servants of the LORD at the Reformation, the end could not be otherwise than we have stated. And though there be found in the reformed church a remnant of pure and holy people, they fail to attain the great purpose of GOD in the building up of the Church ;—there is no unity of design, save that of

individual or personal salvation ; no building up of a *body* for a habitation of God through the Spirit. And not having the means of unity, divisions necessarily increase more and more, till utter dissolution or dismembership ensues.

We are therefore prepared for the revelation given us in the fourfold series of prophecy which describes the fifth period of the Christian dispensation. The spiritual phase of this period is presented to us in

#### THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH OF SARDIS.

Rev. iii. 1—  
6.

1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write ; These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars ; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die ; for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments ; and they shall walk with Me in white ; for they are worthy.

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment ; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My FATHER, and before His angels.

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

“ *Sardis* ” signifies a *Remnant* or *Prince of joy*, and points in its prophetic aspect to the era of the Reformation, at which period, a remnant bearing witness to the truth, and testifying against the corruption of the Church, emerged from its oppressive tyranny, and resorted to a purer worship, by using the Word of God uncorrupted by the traditions of men, and fearful per-

versions of Rome. These holy and devoted men, like Jacob of old, had earnestly cried unto the LORD, and as a Prince they had power with God and prevailed. Therefore were they filled with holy joy and magnified the Name of the LORD because of His faithfulness and truth.

“These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars.” The title, or designation of our LORD, by which this Epistle is headed, is particularly adapted to the spiritual condition and times of the reformed Church, and reveals to us the true character of the Epistle and ground of the complaints made in it. In the prefatory vision to the Epistles, (chapter i.,) the LORD JESUS is represented as “holding the seven stars in His right hand,” which we interpreted to mean, the upholding and sustaining of the angels of the Churches in their office by His Apostles. And He is there represented also as “walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.” In like manner, the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars being coupled together in this Epistle, seem intended to remind the angel of the Church of Sardis, that the gift of the HOLY GHOST cannot be used, save in connection with the ministers of CHRIST. It is important to observe also the difference of expression in regard to the seven stars in the Epistle to Sardis, as well as the making mention of the seven Spirits of God, instead of seven golden candlesticks with which the stars are associated in the vision referred to. In that vision, the LORD JESUS expresses His powerful holding of the stars in His right hand, as also in His Epistle to Ephesus ; but in the Epistle to Sardis, He speaks of Himself not as *holding* them, but as *possessing* or containing them ; not ὁ κρατῶν, but ὁ ἔχων,

He that *hath* the Spirits and the stars. In the vision, His action, direction, and support of the angels are manifested. But in this Epistle, He simply states the fact concerning Himself, that He is the fountain and source of these gifts of ministry and of the Spirit; that both the Spirit and ministry are His. Implying thereby, that though, through the faithlessness of the Church they had ceased to be exercised as at its original constitution, yet they were in Him, and ready to be put forth and brought into active use, for the work of the ministry, and the edifying of the Body of CHRIST, whenever the Church would receive them, and use them under Him, and for Him. And, knowing as we do, that the title of our LORD prefixed to each Epistle, has always an immediate application to the subject matter of the Epistle itself, the cause of warning and rebuke in the one before us, is at once evident. The state of the Sardian Church, as here portrayed, shows a short-coming, and a failing to attain to the perfect ordinances of CHRIST. The LORD had delivered them from the cruel tyranny and fearful abominations of the Papacy under which they had groaned for centuries, and filled them with joy, giving them the Spirit of adoption and sonship, but still they sought not the means of attaining unto perfection; they desired not the building up of CHRIST's Church, that she might be made ready for His appearing and kingdom; but were content to be under civil authority, as though the rule of the State could supply APOSTOLIC rule and guidance. Being ignorant of the perfect way of the LORD, they failed to call upon God for the fulness of the ministries of CHRIST, and gifts of the Spirit as essential to the perfecting of the Church. As a reformed Church, they stood on a high eminence

above those who were contented to remain the slaves of corruption ; but to work the works of God, they should have gone up higher, and sat with CHRIST in the heavenlies, that apprehending HIM as possessing the fulness of the HOLY GHOST, and of all ministry, they might receive out of His fulness even grace for grace, according to the measure of the gift of CHRIST : as it is written, “ When He ascended up on high, He received gifts for men : and He gave some men apostles ; and some men prophets ; and some men evangelists ; and some men pastors and teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of CHRIST, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the SON of GOD, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST.” For lack of these they failed to do the work of CHRIST, and scattering and division, instead of building up, have been the consequence. Vast and comprehensive as this truth is, such is the instruction conveyed in the designation of our LORD in this Epistle which immediately precedes, or rather is connected with the rebuke.

Eph. iv. 8,  
11, 12.

“ I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” However glorious the reformed Church may be in the sight of *men*, this is the judgment of the LORD respecting it—“ *Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*” What then is the calling of the Church if that to which the Reformers attained be not it ? Truly it consists not merely in protesting against evil, but also in holding that which is good. It is that which the very name of Christianity implies. It is the development of the fulness of the HOLY GHOST, in manifested Unity. And herein especially were their works faulty before

GOD. As the Church of CHRIST is One, so it should be *manifestly* such ; all the members of the Body being perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, through the inworking of the FATHER, the ministries of the SON, and the gifts of the HOLY GHOST. But though these things are clearly and distinctly stated in that Holy Book, on which the Sardinian Church took her stand, professing as she did, to take the Word of GOD for her guidance, she did not embrace them ; or if she acknowledged them, they were only received as abstract principles, and not as living realities, to be manifested, and used in a living body. Therefore she is counted *dead* before GOD, notwithstanding her high pretensions, and the *name* which she assumed, as the Remnant, whom the LORD would glorify, and to whom He would give His sanction. Truly, “ *the remnant* ” which the LORD will gather out of all Christendom, and by whom alone He can “ work deliverance in the earth,” must be a united body, possessing all the ordinances of the LORD, and the fulness of the HOLY GHOST. Surely the Church might have pleaded that promise which He spake by Isaiah, “ I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning.” And that by Zechariah, “ I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen down, and close up the breaches thereof, and I will raise up his ruins, and will build it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of *Edom*, and all the heathen which are called by My name.” She might have pleaded among many others the prophetic declaration of the Psalmist, “ Then I restored that which I took not away.” But the Sardinian Church attained not unto this ; self-approving and approved of men, she turned not unto the LORD as the possessor

Isa. i. 26.  
Zech. ix. 11,  
12.

Ps. lxi. 4



of the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars ; and therefore she received not the fulness of the Spirit and the ministries of CHRIST, without which she could not be manifestly one with Him who is at the right hand of God, nor by her works bear a true witness to Him as the resurrection and the life. Thus being dead in the sight of God, and without the ordinances by which alone the Spirit and Rule of the LORD can be manifested, He says,

“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die ; for I have not found thy works perfect before God.” The works of the Church in Sardis appeared in the sight of men as fulfilled, but CHRIST says they were not. They were not fulfilled in God’s sight, however they were in men’s estimation : for God seeth not as man seeth. He regardeth nothing perfect unless it be “according to CHRIST JESUS.” His mystical body must be complete with all its members and endowments ; and if men stop short of this, they can never fulfil the purpose of God, but will ever fail in His hands. Hence it is, that the Sardian Church is exhorted unto watchfulness, and to “strengthen the things which remain, and are ready to die.”

“Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent.” The Church is here held responsible for that which was committed unto her. The Sardian Church being professedly a *reformed* Church, and having a name to *live*, should have held all truth, and all gifts, and all ministries, as irrevocably sealed to her in the covenant of grace, and should have claimed and used them as her rightful inheritance for the LORD’s sake. The exhortation to remember how she has *received* is in perfect keeping with the desig-

nation of the LORD as Head of His body, possessing "The seven Spirits of God and 'the seven stars.'" The Church of CHRIST being *One*, it is as though the LORD had said, "Remember how ye received at the day of Pentecost, when, according to promise, I sent the HOLY GHOST the Comforter to dwell with you and in you, not for a time, but always, even for ever. And remember the gifts of ministry which ye received, and how by these, the stars, (the angels,) were upheld and sustained in their respective spheres, that the Church might come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of her LORD. Why then are you not walking in the light of the HOLY GHOST? Why are you deficient in the work of the ministry, and in the gifts of the Spirit? Believe ye not that I possess all fulness?"

Surely if the reformed Church had well considered this Epistle, she would have humbled herself before God, and repented. The reformers did not sufficiently think of these things. Though they contended earnestly for justification by faith, the truth of the sacraments, and many other great and important doctrines which the Papacy had perverted and abused, how little did they speak of the dignity and office of CHRIST in His Church, or of His future glory and kingdom, or of the restoration of Apostolic rule and Angelic ministry, as necessary to prepare the Church for the day of eternal redemption. Well, therefore, is the Sardian Church exhorted to remember how she has received and heard, and to hold fast and repent. To this is added a note of warning :

"If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." That which binds watchfulness upon the Church, as an indispensable

and unceasing duty, is our responsibility to CHRIST for the grace wherein we stand, and for all the gifts vouchsafed unto us to prepare us for His kingdom. Unless the Church of Sardis should so watch, she is threatened with a judicial visitation. The LORD will come upon her as a *thief*, and she shall *not* know the hour of His coming. This being a spiritual phase or condition, the coming upon her as a thief must evidently refer to some spiritual work of the LORD, done in the midst of the Church, of which she may be cognizant, but fail to recognize it; "A work which they shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto them." As it is written in the prophets, "With stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people. To whom He said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest: and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken."

Isa. xxviii.  
11, 12, 13.

"Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy." As in the general Apostacy of Israel, in the days of Elias, the LORD said, He had reserved unto Himself seven thousand *knees*, because in bowing to the image stood the act of renouncing the worship of the living and true God; so here, the corruption and declension of the Sardian Church, being defined in having only a *name* to live, whilst they were dead, the LORD's approbation of the faithful is given in the same appropriate and significant terms, "Thou hast a few *names* even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments." This

metaphorical expression, "*a few names*," denoting *individuality*, shows also that there was no true semblance of the Church of CHRIST in Sardis; NO VISIBLE UNITY AS A BODY. But there were a few *names* only, whom the LORD approved, who had not defiled their garments; and the promise made to them implies that they were in a condition to acknowledge the LORD at His appearing, and that they shall receive the reward of righteousness in His kingdom.

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My FATHER, and before His angels." These promises are no less appropriate to the times of the Sardian Church-state, than the foregoing part of the Epistle. That which is to be overcome, is of course, the temptations into which they as a community had fallen. Whoso would approve himself before God, must rise up out of the corrupt and death-like state of Sardis, into the spiritual and heavenly life of CHRIST, "full of faith and of the HOLY GHOST," bearing witness unto His resurrection and Ascension, and waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body. These shall be clothed in white raiment at His appearing and kingdom. The "white raiment" is emblematical of the righteousness of saints, and also of the glory of the resurrection. Hence at our LORD's transfiguration on the Mount, His raiment became shining, exceeding

S. Mark ix.  
3.

white as snow, so as no fuller on earth could white them. And in Rev. xix., the saints which accompany Him out of heaven, are "clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

The next promise, "I will not blot out his name out of the book of life," is equally appropriate to the

faithful ones in Sardis. The blessing which rests on such, is put in contrast with the shame and confusion which would attach to those who attained not unto CHRIST, but had only a *name* to live, being approved before men only. And the *book* also in which their names should remain is put in opposition to mere abstract doctrines gathered from the Word of God; for it is the book of *life* in which their names are written. This expression represents the condition of those who shall attain unto the resurrection from among the dead; that is, they shall be of the first resurrection, and enter into life eternal at the coming of the LORD. We are here taught the vast difference between resting in the mere letter of Scripture, and living in the Spirit. The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. What a lesson for the Sardian Church! The book of God, from which they professed to draw all their consolation and strength, will not suffice. Its truths must be fulfilled in living men, and living ordinances; the Church must be a *living* Epistle, known and read of all men. And those who thus confess the *name of* CHRIST, even the name of Him "Who hath the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars," before men, He will also confess *their* names before His FATHER and before His angels. The confessing of their names is an acknowledgment of their persons before God, and before His angels, as His faithful servants, and implies that they shall receive a reward according to their attainments.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." The Epistle concludes like the foregoing; and whilst like them, it has a universal application throughout, it exhibits a most striking speciality and adaptation to the Sardian church-state,

as manifested at this period of Christian history. This spiritual phase has its corresponding civil one described in

### THE FIFTH SEAL.

Rev. vi. 9. 9 And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held ;

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O LORD holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ?

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled.

Each successive period of Christian history reveals to us a greater declension from the mind of CHRIST. As in the Epistle to the Sardian Church there appears no recognition of the Church as the body of CHRIST, much less of its being the fulness of Him that filleth all in all, so in the opening of this seal, our attention is not called to it as in the preceding ones, by one of the living creatures, but we have only a statement of the things revealed under it, implying thereby that it belongs to a period in which there is scarcely any perception or acknowledgment of the LORD in His ordinances.

This seal represents the condition of the public mind, or the civil phase of the times of the Reformation. The whole of Christendom was moved by the event ; and the souls of the martyrs of JESUS, as it were, called out in the spirit of the times for vengeance upon their enemies, and the opposers of the Church.

“The altar,” which stood in the court of the temple, and on which the sacrifices were offered, is here used

to represent the condition of the martyred saints, who were offered up as a sacrifice to God, in protesting against the corruptions of the Church of Rome, and in testifying unto the truth of the Gospel of CHRIST. The blood of the victims offered on the Jewish Altar was poured in a place beside it ; and this blood being an emblem of the natural life, represents the life of those who had thus given themselves a sacrifice in their service and faith, and for the defence and confirmation of the Gospel. All that those who persecuted them could do was to kill the body, they could do no more. Though put to death in the flesh, they were quickened in the spirit, and though taken from the earth, their voices were heard by the ear of faith as beneath the altar, crying aloud for vengeance, like the blood of Abel who fell by the hand of his brother. The Apostle says, he both *saw* the souls of these martyred saints, and *heard their voice*. And their cry is, that God would judge and avenge their blood on them that dwell on the earth, and destroy that system of iniquity by which His people were still held in captivity. The emblems used in the prophecy are appropriate to the civil phase of this period, because this cry from beneath the altar expresses very aptly the spirit of vengeance and retribution which was at this time expressed, and called for, upon the persecutors of those who had proved themselves faithful even unto death, in their testimony for the truth. The civil government, which had been the arm of the Papacy to inflict its judgments, was now used of God to express in act, the cry of His martyred saints, and to anticipate the vengeance which shall be taken upon the men who uphold the system which has destroyed them.

It is a remarkable circumstance that superstition has

always associated the relics of martyrs, many of whom, were doubtless *true* martyrs of JESUS, with the erection of altars. It is no less remarkable that for the last three or four centuries there has been a crying out for retribution, and for the avenging of their blood upon them who dwell on the earth, even by those whose character demonstrates that they are the children of them who slew the faithful servants of the LORD because of their righteousness, and faithful witness. And so loud has been this cry, that it has intimidated the oppressor, so that the blood of the saints is not shed any more. Still the vengeance lingers, and the long-suffering of God is salvation to those who will repent, and it will yet linger until the fulness of the time be come, when the enemies of the LORD having filled up the measure of their iniquity by another fearful persecution of His saints, under the reign of the personal Antichrist, vengeance shall come upon them to the uttermost, and the oppressor shall be destroyed for ever. The LORD will take vengeance upon the usurper of His power, and the oppressor of His saints ; as it is written in the Psalms, “When He maketh inquisition for blood, He remembereth them : He forgetteth not the cry of the afflicted.” “The LORD is known by the judgment which He executeth : the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God. For the needy shall not always be forgotten, the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.” Then also, as the prophet Isaiah declares, shall this proverb be taken up against the king of Babylon. “How hath the oppressor ceased ! the golden city ceased ! The LORD hath broken the staff of *the wicked* and the sceptre of the *rulers*.”

Ps. ix.

Isa. xlv. 4, 5.



In the vision also, the Apostle beheld the martyred saints clothed in white raiment—"White robes were given unto every one of them." The white robes are emblematical of that righteousness in which they stand accepted before God, through faith in the all-perfect sacrifice of CHRIST, as also of that inward purity of heart wrought in them by the HOLY GHOST, and which was manifested in their lives. The white robes are also emblematical of the priestly office, as it shall be exercised in the kingdom: and this, conjointly with the regal office, shall be the gift of CHRIST, to those who have borne a faithful witness for Him on the earth, as it is said in the prefatory vision to these seals, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth."

We may also notice again the synchronism which exists between this seal and the Epistle. In the Epistle it is said, "He that overcometh the same shall be clothed in *white raiment*." And in the seal it is said, "*white robes* were given unto every one of them." They are also told to wait for a *little* season; that is, until the sixth period shall have run its course, before their reward shall be given them: for at the end of that period, when their brethren shall have finished their testimony, and be slain for the witness which they bear, shall the dead in CHRIST be raised. And thus the faithful servants of JESUS CHRIST are assured that as they have suffered for His Name, so shall they reign with Him, and that the time cometh, when the "kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the king-

Dan. vii. 27.

dom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers (*margin*) shall serve and obey Him."

We will now pass on from the Civil phase to consider that of the Ecclesiastical, which is revealed to us in the sounding of

### THE FIFTH TRUMPET.

Rev. ix. 1—  
12.

1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment *was* as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

7 And the shapes of the locusts *were* like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold, and their faces *were* as the faces of men.

8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth *were* as the teeth of lions.

9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings *was* as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power *was* to hurt men five months.

11 And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon.

12 One woe is past; *and*, behold, there cometh two woes more hereafter.

As in the two preceding forms of prophecy, there is an evident indication of a greater declension from the mind of CHRIST at this period of which we have spoken, so in this trumpet phase there is the solemn notification of a greater evil coming upon the Church than any which preceded it, and which should affect society at large, the trumpet itself being prefaced by an announcement of triple "*woe*" as the character of the three remaining ones, of which this is the first.

They are generally called the woe trumpets; and indeed when seen in the light of God, they are discerned to be the precursors of that eternal woe which shall fall upon that wicked or lawless one (ὁ ἄνομος) who <sup>2 Thess. ii. 8.</sup> is to be destroyed at the coming of the LORD.

This first woe trumpet is usually applied to Mahomet, and his Saracenic hosts, but if we test this interpretation by the Scriptures, we think it will be evident that it cannot stand; for consistency requires that we should give the same interpretation to the symbols here used as we would give to them in other places. As for instance, "a *star*," when used as an ecclesiastical emblem, denotes a minister of JESUS CHRIST, or one placed in a conspicuous and commanding position as the guide of others in the Church. And we have endeavoured to show that the series of trumpets from the very nature of their symbols are ecclesiastical. Now as Mahomet was not a minister of CHRIST, he could not be symbolized by "a star in the heavens," so neither could he be said to have fallen from such a spiritual standing or ecclesiastical position, seeing that he never occupied it. In this we shall be confirmed by the remaining symbols.

We shall interpret this trumpet as having its fulfilment at the time of the Reformation. Many we know, will start at such an application of it. But before they come to any conclusion in their own mind, let them first attentively consider, what are the ideas we shall present, and first understand our interpretation, before they conclude it is wrong.

Eph. iv.

No one who is acquainted with the purpose of God, will deny that CHRIST so constituted His Church that it should remain *one visible body on the earth*, so that every member being set in its appointed place, and exercising that true liberty which is essential to, and consistent with its unity, might minister to the strength and edification of the whole, even as S. Paul states in his Epistle to the Ephesians, where he exhorts them “to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.” And again, “Speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even CHRIST, from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” Although the Church had long declined from this perfect way of the LORD, yet until the time of the Reformation it struggled to maintain its unity, and however fatal the errors and oppression of the Roman hierarchy through the assumption of its Bishop have been, there was an endeavour to preserve unity, at least in name, notwithstanding the Greek

schism. But by casting off her ecclesiastical subjection, a principle was introduced fatal to the unity of the Church, by the assumption that every man had the right of being, as it were, his own king and priest, and the ultimate judge of all matters pertaining to his eternal salvation. And although this may be called the natural result of the oppression and tyranny of Rome, which had been leading Christian men without intelligence, and without any respect to their private feeling, or discernment in reference to themselves, and their own position ; yet what was assumed in its place, and called the right of private judgment, or in other words, the right to throw off all spiritual restraints, and the bands which held them together as members of a body, was the giving of power to every evil spirit to lead and seduce men from the right ways of the LORD, under the specious name of Christian liberty ; which in most cases amounted only to a liberty to do evil. Nor is it any answer to this remark to say, that before, men were compelled to do evil by those who ought to have led them into the good and right way. For although a man may be led wrong by those who ought to guide him into truth, it is impossible he can be led right when he is his own teacher, and only led and guided by himself. However unwilling the good and holy men who took part in the Reformation, would have been to advocate the doctrine of the irresponsible right of private judgment, yet such was the principle now introduced, by the manner of their protest against the errors of the communion from which they seceded. The object they sought to obtain was good, but the principle introduced by the course they adopted was evil, and will lead in the end to the entire subversion, and casting off of every ordinance of God.

S. Matt.  
xxiii. 2, 3.

What our LORD said to His disciples, touching their subjection to those who were placed over them, is precisely what we have endeavoured to express—"The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat ; whatsoever therefore they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not ye after their works : for they say, and do not." Our LORD distinguished between the holiness of the person and the authority of the office as being of GOD. And whilst He condemned those who occupied the seat of Moses, He enjoined obedience to them because of their place, standing as they did in the ordinance of GOD to them.

In thus speaking of the principles introduced by the course adopted at the Reformation, we desire to be distinctly understood as not impeaching or judging the character of individuals as affecting their integrity of purpose and uprightness of heart before GOD. We do not for a moment doubt that GOD's mercy was with them ; and that He is still with all those who believe in our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and who have been baptized into His Name, in whatever communion or section of the Church they may be found. But we speak of their acts, in reference to the Church, as a  
 Eph. iv. 5, 6. constituted body upon earth, having "One LORD, one faith, one baptism, one GOD and FATHER of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all ;" which body ought to be *manifestly* one in the bonds of Christian fellowship ; every member thereof recognizing each other member as of the same household of faith, and all perfectly joined together in the one hope of their calling. We believe, therefore, that this woe trumpet represents the *ecclesiastical* position and condition of the Church as respects its outward polity. And unless this be borne in mind, the interpretation we are now

giving will be misunderstood, and our readers will be in danger of imputing views to us which we repudiate and condemn.

However new the idea may seem to those who have not considered the prophecy in the light of Scripture revelation, we must not withhold our conviction, that the "star" here mentioned as falling from heaven, must be either Leo X., or Luther; and we think that the history of these times will show that it attaches rather to the former than to the latter. Luther and his companions did well in testifying against the errors of the Romish Church. Their object was, by their witness, to effect a reformation in the Church, and not a secession from it. But after numerous attempts to attain this end, aided as they were by the protection of some of the Catholic princes, and after several conferences had been held with Luther by the delegates of the Papal Court, it appeared evident either that Rome itself must adopt the principles of reform, or that Luther and his party must be crushed. His holiness came to the determination to cut him entirely off, with those who adhered to his doctrines, from the communion of the Church, and by this act compelled the Reformers to establish a communion distinct from that of Rome, so that henceforth the outward unity of the western Church was broken, and that system adopted, which in its principles, as we shall see, led to what is symbolically called the opening of the bottomless pit; *he* therefore must be the fallen star, in this sense, by whose power it was opened.

As the act of cutting off attaches to Rome, and not to the Reformed Church, we believe that the symbol of the falling star must be interpreted as dated from the act of Leo X., who thus fell from the position he

held of being the head of the western division of the Church.

By examining the places in the New Testament, where the word here rendered "*bottomless pit*" occurs, we shall obtain its true signification. It is used first in S. Luke viii. 31, in reference to the abode of evil spirits. In Romans x. 7, for the place of the departed, or hades. It is also spoken of in this book, (xvii. and xx.) as the place from whence the beast, the eighth head, or personal Antichrist shall arise, and also as the place where Satan is to be bound. In all these texts it is evidently used to designate a place or condition, and the place so designated must *here* be regarded as symbolic. If we look at it as the abode in which the soul separated from the body is located between death and resurrection, as it is evidently used in Romans x. 7, it must represent symbolically a condition in which the abstract forms of truth are wholly separated from the ordinances of the Church; and in this sense, it is strikingly applicable to the condition of those separated from the Church of Rome. If used in reference to the place or abode of evil spirits, as in S. Luke viii. 31, it must signify a loosing of the power of Satan, enabling him to lead and misguide men. Now we know that the only power on earth which can bind Satan, and his hosts, is that with which the Lord invested the Church at the beginning, giving unto it, as He did, the power of the keys, saying unto Apostles—and not unto an Arabian impostor—"Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." That, therefore, which gives liberty to Satan, must be some act of power in the Church. And the act of separating the reformers from the communion of the Church of



Rome, with the bringing in of the right of private judgment, as at the Reformation, appears aptly to represent this opening of the bottomless pit. The consequence of which act was, that men, released from all ecclesiastical discipline and rule, and left without any acknowledgment of God in His ordinances, became their own rulers and guides, and did that which was right in their own eyes.

“Smoke came out of the pit.” The smoke arising from the pit represents the false doctrines which came over the Church in consequence of the contention and strife subsisting among those who ought to have been united together in one mind and one judgment. And the strife and confusion, the uncertainty and doubt, which were the natural consequence of those false principles, were such as to produce the effects represented by the expression, “the sun and the air were darkened ;” whereby is signified the obscuration of all rule and discipline. “The sun,” interpreted ecclesiastically, is an emblem of the ruling power of the Church : and “the air ” is an emblem of the Spirit of God, and is significant of the proper element which the Church should breathe, and by which alone it can exist, even as men live by breathing the pure element of heaven.

“And out of the smoke came locusts.” The peculiar character of the locusts is, their *destructiveness*, so that wherever they are conveyed by the wind, they eat up and destroy every green thing that comes in their way. In some countries, they come in great multitudes upon the corn, and what they do not eat they infect by their touch, and the moisture which comes from them. This symbol is an apt representation of the teachers of false doctrine, who after destroying much of the truth,

render what remains useless by the deleterious effect which their teaching produces.

Those interpreters who make the locust a symbol of the Arab, by mixing up the *literal* with the *symbolic*, destroy all consistency of interpretation, and so leave it to mere fancy to provide the similarity between the rest of the symbol, and that which they believe to be represented. And if it is to be admitted, that when the people of any particular country are symbolized, the symbol or similitude used should be proper to that country, and to that country alone, we ought to find in this symbol the description of some creature existing in Arabia, and characteristic of the character of its inhabitants, whereas the symbol before us has nothing in nature corresponding to it; for although it has the *name* of locust, there is no living creature upon the earth altogether of the form and make here described, any more than there is a creature in the sea with seven heads and ten horns. And those interpreters who make the locust symbolic of national character, and not ecclesiastical in its signification, are obliged to give to some of its characteristics a literal, and to others a symbolic interpretation. Thus, for instance, "Their faces like the faces of men," and their "hair as the hair of women," they interpret literally as the representation of men having moustaches and beards, and wearing long hair. In like manner the horse-like shape of the locusts is made to represent real horses, and their breastplates literal "breastplates of iron." Consistency, therefore, requires, that these Arab gentlemen should have *literally* "the teeth of lions," and also "long tails with a sting at the end." And, moreover, to carry out the interpretation, this Arab band must be seen arising out of the very place

and locality into which Satan himself is cast for a thousand years, namely, "*the bottomless pit.*" Further, if this interpretation be admitted as true, we can be under no difficulty as to the locality from whence the beast or eighth head shall come ; for he is said to arise out of the same place, that is (according to their view of the prophecy,) from Arabia. It is evident that such interpreters are not aware of the consequences of their system of interpretation, which having in it no rule or principle, leads them to adopt the most absurd and inconsistent opinions.

On the other hand we believe that this symbolic creature represents the destructive character of infidel men ; that is, infidel as regards *ecclesiastical* rule and subjection, and not infidel in the abstract doctrines and faith of the Gospel of CHRIST, although holding them in a false and erroneous position. To this character, as we shall presently show, this symbolic locust will fully apply.

"And to them was given power as the scorpions of the earth have power." The bite or sting of the scorpion is said to be fatal. And the doctrine of these locust teachers, which strikes at all *headship* and rule in the Church, is made effectual by the Satanic agency which accompanies their word, causing it to inflict a deadly sting by leading men to renounce all sense of headship, and thus utterly destroying the faith they should exercise in God's ordinances. Satan's great object is to bring men from under headship, that they may come under *his* power. And, therefore, to this locust band power is said to be given "as the scorpions of the earth have power." Those teachers whose doctrines are subversive of the Headship of CHRIST in His Church, that is, of subjection to Him

in His ordinances, give forth "the doctrines of devils," and inflict a deadly wound in those who come under their power.

"And it was commanded that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men which had not the seal of God in their foreheads." Men are compared to grass, by Isaiah; "All flesh is grass." David also says, "They of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth." Trees also are used by Isaiah to represent the people of God. "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of My sanctuary: and I will make the place of My feet glorious." These three symbols, "The grass of the earth, green things, and trees," are used in this prophecy to designate those who abide in the faith of CHRIST, as their Head, from whom they derive spiritual life, and by whom they are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.

Isa. xl. 6, 7.  
Ps. lxxii. 16.  
Isa. lx. 13.  
Col. ii. 19;  
and Eph. i.  
13, 14.

As the mark of the *beast* representing scorn and hatred of the truth, designates his followers for his own, so the seal of God in the forehead of those "who follow the Lamb," points out an opposite class of persons as emphatically His own. The sealing of God's people by His Spirit is thus applied by S. Paul in his Epistle to Timothy, where speaking of the errors of some who depart from the faith, he says, "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having *this seal*, The LORD knoweth them that are His." And here we may observe, that this allusion to the seal of God in the forehead does not imply that this

2 Tim. ii. 19.

trumpet must necessarily synchronize with the sixth seal, but the contrary. For in the account of the sealing in the sixth period of Christian history, we find that it is not general, but conferred on a *select number*, and that these are sealed against a particular and desolating form of judgment, and for a special object: whilst here, it is evidently used as the true mark of *all* the people of God, because *all others* are hurt by this locust plague, while we are constrained to admit that none of the true servants of God were permitted to be tormented by them. It is the more important to mark the distinction here pointed out, because of the error some persons are inclined to fall into on account of this supposed synchronism. Generically, no doubt, all God's children may be said to be sealed, because they are baptized into one body by one Spirit, and thereby made one with Him, whom God the FATHER hath sealed. And according to the circumstances of peril and danger to which these children of God are exposed, the distinction between those who are faithful, and those who are not, becomes more prominent.

“And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man.” Their not having power to kill, appears to represent that under this trumpet woe, there is not an utter extinction of the forms of life, but that the contentions and schisms in the Church, consequent upon the principle of independence, and the right of private judgment, have *tormented* men by infusing doubt and uncertainty into their minds, as to the reality and nature of the Sacraments and ordinances of God, and where, or among

what section of the baptized the Communion of the body of CHRIST exists. The correctness of this application is manifested in the condition of mind and spirit so apparent among the sects—their mutual animosity and the absence of all rule and government among them: each division being held together by voluntary subjection to its petty chief, while anarchy and confusion universally prevail among all, and instead of true confidence and peace, they are filled with doubts and fears. Their torment is like the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man: for having lost their faith in the Church of CHRIST, and its ordinances as of GOD, their wound is incurable, they have nothing that can afford true confidence and peace, and are as

2 Tim. iii. 7. men “ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

“And in those days shall men seek death and shall not find it, and they shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.” This language evidently cannot be understood literally, because men can always find death when they choose. We must therefore interpret it according to the phase of history here represented. This symbolic language, we believe, expresses the desire of men to be wholly free from all ecclesiastical form and government whatever, a point to which Protestantism has ever been tending; that is, to be free from all outward forms and observances in the exercise of spiritual life; supposing that true religion consists in a transcendental spirituality in which no outward form appears—a point to which the Friends and Plymouth Brethren profess to have attained in our days. But during this woe period men do not attain unto it: for the spirit of infidelity has not so far wrought during this period as altogether to free men from the ecclesi-

astical bonds and obligations, which were either imposed upon them by the State in the shape of national churches, or which their own consciences seemed to render necessary for their guidance. The principles advocated at the Reformation, and which have wrought in Protestants from the beginning, are destructive of all outward form and church discipline. And it is evident that if men cast off the forms of the Church as the outward and visible manifestation of unity in which they are held, and select and adopt forms of their own, the natural consequence of such a proceeding must be the utter rejection of all form whatever, and in such a state, the Church would be ecclesiastically dead. But this condition of things is sought in vain during the period of the fifth trumpet. Men seek it, but it flees from them. God in His great mercy prevents it, until He has gathered together His elect from the four winds under heaven; and then, and not till then, shall those who desire to be free from all restraint or discipline of His Church, have the desire of their hearts: for then shall "that lawless one" be revealed, who shall trample upon every ordinance of God, so as to cause even "the daily sacrifice to cease."

"And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle, and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold." The locusts being described like unto horses prepared unto battle intimates the fleshly and contentious spirit existing among the ministers of religion during this trumpet woe, and especially manifested by the leaders of the innumerable sects and controversies which Protestantism has produced. "Crowns of gold being seen on their heads," represents their holding what truth they have in entire independence of one another. For whilst *gold* is an emblem

of truth, a *crown* is proper only to a king, and is a symbol to him who wears it that he has no lord or ruler over him. "Their faces were as the faces of men, and their hair as the hair of women." The face of man in this ecclesiastical phase of prophecy represents a teacher. The long hair of women is emblematical of the subjection of the teacher to the opinions of those who should be under his authority, of whom he is in fact a mere representative. These symbols, therefore, being combined in the prophecy and applied to the same individuals, are intended to show that each one of these teachers, although a head to himself, is obliged to regulate his doctrine and instruction according to the opinions of those who have selected him for their teacher. "Their teeth being like the teeth of lions," expresses the authority which they assume in their word of teaching: and having no superior over them, they lay down as dogmas, that which they, or their people have originated for themselves, and which they regard as Apostolic. "And they had breastplates as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle." S. Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, mentions the "breastplate" as an emblem of righteousness—"Having on the breastplate of righteousness." As the breastplate is used to defend and preserve the more vital parts of a soldier, so "the righteousness of God which is by the faith of JESUS CHRIST, unto all and upon all that believe," is that which defends and keeps the life of the Christian, and is also a defence and confirmation of the truth spoken by the ministry of CHRIST. But the breastplates of these locust teachers were as breastplates of *iron*, showing that their righteousness which

Eph. vi. 14.

Rom. iii. 22.



they use as a defence and confirmation of their tenets, is not the righteousness of God or of the Spirit, but the righteousness of the flesh; they boast themselves of their own righteousness, and strenuously maintain they are in a right position ecclesiastically considered.

"The sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots, and many horses running to battle." A chariot is an appropriate symbol of a Church, or of the Communion of a body within itself, as "horses" are of the strength of the flesh; and the "wings" being symbolic of ministry, strikingly represent the contentious and warlike spirit manifested among the various sects into which the Church has been broken, and which have contended so violently with one another, that the exercise of their ministry has assumed more the character of war than the ministry of the Gospel of peace.

"And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails." Scorpions are emblematic of lawless and wicked men led by evil spirits. Their tails represent false teachers, or teachers of lies; as it is written, "The prophet that teacheth lies he is the tail." And S. Peter tells us that as there were false prophets among the people under the Old Testa-

Ezek. ii. 6.

Isa. lx. 14.

Vide 2 S. Pet. ii.

ment dispensation, so there would be false teachers under the New, "who privily should bring in damnable heresies, even denying the LORD that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." Their stings by which they inflict a wound, and eject a dangerous poison, show the pernicious effects of heretical doctrines, and the pain and anguish of mind and spirit produced by them.

“And their power was to hurt men five months.” It is remarkable that from the last Council of Trent, 1545, to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, 1685, is exactly five months of years, reckoning lunar time. But while we believe the five months twice mentioned in this prophecy, describe a period during which this woe is in active operation, there can be no doubt that it also reveals the special character of the teaching of the time. Consistency of interpretation leads us to perceive, that the months mentioned here are lunar months, instead of solar. And as the moon is used in this book as an emblem of fleshly or earthly ordinances, so the lunar months distinguish a time, when there is an entire absence of all spiritual working or spiritual rule. Moreover, as the senses of man, which are five-fold, embrace every outward object, so the months here mentioned being *five*, discover to us that the character of the teaching referred to in this prophecy, is that which is commonly called evangelical teaching, as apart from the doctrine of the Sacraments and ordinances of the Church; and of which, *seven* (and not *five*) is the appropriate and mystical number.

“And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.”

Prov. xxx.  
27.

These locusts are said to have a *king* over them; but we read in the book of Proverbs that “the locusts have *no* king, yet go they forth all of them by bands.” This apparent inconsistency, shows that these locust teachers, although they have no visible king or ruler over them,—for they profess to be spiritual and spiritually guided,—yet nevertheless they have a king who

is after their taste, invisible, even that evil angel who has produced these divisions and schisms in the Church, and are under the guidance of *him*, whom S. Paul calls "the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience."

The name also of this king or angel of the bottomless pit, being that of the Destroyer, and being given both in the Hebrew and Greek tongue, intimates to us that it is the same evil power which wrought in the confederacies of the Jewish people against the LORD, that now worketh in the confederacies of Christian men described in the prophecies of this period. S. Paul, speaking of those who perished in the wilderness, says, "Neither let <sup>1</sup> Cor. x. 7. us tempt CHRIST, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents; neither let us murmur, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer." How solemn is the thought that so many come under the dominion of *him* who is the destroyer of all faith in God and His ordinances! For when men cast off the yoke of CHRIST and break His bonds asunder, they are led captive by Satan at his will, whose object is to destroy both body and soul in hell.

The judicial phase of this period of Christian history is revealed to us in the outpouring of

#### THE FIFTH VIAL.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, <sup>Rev. xvi. 10, 11.</sup>

11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

We have already seen in our interpretation of the Epistle to the Church of Pergamos, that the *seat* of

the beast is Rome. His seat or throne is used symbolically of his power, which extends throughout Christendom; therefore, it must be upon the hierarchy of the Church, that this vial of God's wrath is poured out. And this visitation of God is the reward, and indeed the necessary consequence, of the apostacy of the Church: for it is said of the beast, that "his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain;" or in other words, having refused to receive the light of God's truth which would have been for their blessing, the testimony against their evil deeds became unto them an occasion of hardening their hearts still more against God; and not only the Papal States, but the whole of Christendom became full of darkness. The light which broke in at the era of the Reformation being rejected, the Church was left to consummate her wickedness, by "framing iniquity by a law." The Roman Church embodying its corruptions in the errors of the council of Trent, put the seal, as it were, upon its own condemnation. And the Protestants by rejecting the ordinances of the LORD, and taking the Civil Ruler for their defence and guide, (more from necessity than choice,) showed that they had erred also, and departed from the right way of the LORD; so that of them also it may be said, "they gnawed their tongues for pain." The pain and anguish which came upon the Romanists were manifested in the persecutions to which they resorted, in order, if possible, to uphold and perpetuate their corrupt system. For they sought in their bigotry and zeal to exterminate every faithful witness for the LORD who sought to bring to light the errors into which they had fallen. Those who openly witnessed for the truth of God, and the life of CHRIST in His

Church, were exposed to the power of the Inquisition, which was now renewed and increased. Those who held the civil power took part also in the merciless slaughter of the faithful servants of the LORD, so that they who escaped the Inquisition fell under the power of the sword. These persecutions continued, more or less, until the period of the French Revolution, A.D. 1793, when a retribution in blood fell equally upon Rome, and upon the kingdoms which had thus persecuted the saints of God. Of all those on whom this vial of God's wrath is poured out, it is said, that "they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains, and their sores, and repented not of their deeds." The pains and sores which this vial of God's wrath inflicted, produced no marks of repentance, but a determination to pursue the same course they had adopted; and they blasphemed His Holy Name, by casting their sin upon God, instead of acknowledging that their sores and pains were the fruit or consequence of their own iniquity. As the sores in the natural body are the consequence of internal disease or impure blood, even so in the body or community of the baptized the life had become impaired or vitiated, and their corrupt practices caused such disaffection both to the ecclesiastical and the civil ruler, that the judicial visitation of God, revealed in this vial, was most severely felt throughout Christendom; nothing can so well describe this as the emphatic language of the prophecy itself, "they gnawed their tongues for pain."

## PART XI.

THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA. THE SIXTH SEAL. REVELATION VII. THE SIXTH TRUMPET. REVELATION X. AND XI. 1—14. THE SIXTH VIAL.

HAVING traced the history of the Christian Church through the preceding periods, as revealed in the respective Epistles, and the contemporaneous forms of prophecy, we have found that her course has been one of continued declension from the mind and Spirit of the LORD. But the purpose of God, in CHRIST JESUS our LORD, cannot fail for ever. For though the Church has failed, He faileth not. He will not forsake His inheritance for His great Name's sake. Hence in the midst of a general and most fearful apostacy, "He remembereth mercy, and revives His work in the midst of the years," which revival is revealed to us in the prophecies belonging to the sixth period of the Christian dispensation. And as outward and visible things derive their form of being from the *spiritual*, so the revival of the work of the LORD in this period of Christian history is brought under our notice in

1 Sam. xii.  
22.

Hab. iii. 2.

### THE SIXTH EPISTLE.

Rev. iii. 7—  
13.

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth;

8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My Name.

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11 Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, *which is new Jerusalem*, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and *I will write upon him* My new name.

13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

If any of our readers are not convinced of the truth of our exposition respecting the names assigned to the several churches to which these Epistles are addressed, or have any doubt of their mystical meaning, we conceive that doubt will be removed by the name inscribed in this Epistle, addressed to the angel of the Church in Philadelphia, which signifies "*brotherly love.*"

This inscription, as in all the former instances, serves as a key-note to the Epistle, intimating the subject matter of it, and the period of which it is prophetic. The very name implies a returning to a former condition. Therefore, as the Church of Ephesus was rebuked for having left her first love, so the Church of Philadelphia is commended and approved for having returned to that condition here expressed by brotherly love. For, S. John says, love to our brother is the outward and ostensible proof of our love to God; and S. Paul tells us, that "Charity is the bond of perfectness." This heavenly principle, then, marks a

Vide 1 S.  
John iv. 20.

Col. iii. 14.

*reaction* in the Church—a true fraternity—the uniting of member to member in one holy and indissoluble bond of brotherhood; and as a consequence, leading to the revival of every other gift of God in His Church. For having the greatest and best of gifts, namely, that of *love*, the rest will follow in course; nay, they are included in it, and must in due time appear. So long as Christian men deceive themselves by saying, “We *have* the most excellent gift, and therefore the other gifts of the Spirit are not necessary,” there is no hope; but when they begin to discover that they have *not* the former, and know nothing comparatively of love to God and each other “in the Spirit,” it becomes evident how much they have grieved the HOLY SPIRIT; the other gifts of God having declined only in proportion to our declension in this. But in this period of Christian history, the Church returns to her “first love.” The whole Epistle breathes of love, and shows the blessed effects or consequence of the use of this fruit of the Spirit.

Coloss. i. 8.

Although we have only briefly touched upon the subject of the *names*, we trust sufficient has been said to show that they are given to express the spirit of the Epistles, and as a means of ascertaining their true interpretation. We pass on, therefore, from the most consoling of these names—Philadelphia, or brotherly love—to the Epistle bearing its inscription.

“These things saith He that is Holy, He that is True, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth.” As the inscription of the Epistle, so is the designation of the LORD by which He heads it especially and strikingly appropriate to the condition of the Church. It was so in all the foregoing Epistles, and



it will be found not less so in this. The Church emerging out of the *Sardian* state, is seen in much weakness and apparent helplessness, yet with purity of heart, fervency of love, and sincerity of faith and truth. And in this condition, she is encouraged by the LORD, to look off from herself unto Him, as most able and willing to supply all her wants.

She is first directed to look to Him as the ground and source of all holiness—"These things saith He Ps. lxxi. 23. *that is Holy.*" Under this title He is often spoken of in the Old Testament, "The Holy One of Israel," Isa. lvii. 15. "Whose Name is Holy." In the vision of Isaiah, Compare Isa vi. with S. John xii. 41. which describes the glory of CHRIST, we have this threefold inscription, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of Hosts." David also calls Him "The Holy One." Ps. xvi. 10. Now this title could be no source of strength or encouragement to the Church, were He not in *the very truth of our nature* One with us. This is the root of all holiness in the Church. "He Who is Holy," was Vide Heb. iv. 15. in the truth of our nature, tempted in all points like as we are, and therefore He is able to succour them that are tempted, and to overcome sin in us. Against this truth the devil rages; for there is no truth he fears so much as this—God incarnate—God in our flesh—because it despoils him of his power. But it is the joy of the Christian, to know and believe, that "He Vide Heb. ii. 11. Who is Holy," is not "ashamed to call us brethren;" and that as He is one with us, as well as one with the FATHER, so He is able to preserve us unblameable in holiness before God, by His Spirit which dwelleth in us. Therefore it is written, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." He is indeed the contradiction of all sin, as S. John testifies, "He that sinneth hath not seen Him S. Pet. i. 16. neither known Him." And because the angel of the S. John iii. 6.

Church of Philadelphia earnestly desired to be holy, and taught his flock to desire it also, CHRIST presents Himself as the "Holy One," that He might be assured of attaining unto a meetness for His appearing and kingdom.

The LORD JESUS also presents Himself as "*He that is true*," that the angel of the Philadelphian Church may be encouraged to follow after the truth as it is in JESUS ; and to maintain the reality of Christianity, in contradistinction to the Church of Sardis, which had a *name* only to live. The word here translated *true*, means truthful or real ; and is used by Greek authors when they would distinguish the real from the fictitious. In the Scriptures it is used to distinguish the realities of the Gospel from the shadows of the law. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by JESUS CHRIST." "And we know, (says S. John,) that the SON of GOD is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know HIM THAT IS TRUE, and we are in HIM that is *true*, even in His SON JESUS CHRIST." This designation of our LORD is opposed to that condition which has a name only, and must be a comfort to the Philadelphian Church who are thirsting for *realities*, and desiring to bear witness unto CHRIST, not in word only, but in deed, that He may be seen in His ordinances, and by divers gifts of the HOLY GHOST ; by Apostolic rule, by Prophetic light, by Evangelical ministry, and by Pastoral care and teaching. "*He that is true*," has also respect to the truthfulness of His Word. What He said at the beginning concerning these gifts, that they were given not for a time but for ever, even unto the end of the age, were TRUE words. And so it will be found that they have only been hidden through our unfaithful-

S. John i.  
17.

1 S. John v.  
20.

ness, as it is written of Him—"Then I restored that which I took not away." Hence in this Epistle, He seeks to comfort those who rest upon His Word, and stand up for its integrity. And surely, if any Church needs encouragement, it is the Church of Philadelphia. For it is surrounded by those who make the Word of God of none effect through their traditions. Ps. lxi. 4.

He also describes Himself as "*He that hath the key of David.*" This is an emblem of that attribute of power which belongeth unto Him as the Head of the Church, and universal LORD. "All power in heaven and earth is given into His hands." And "the key of David" has special reference to the exercise of that power for His Church in restoring her gifts and opening the mysteries of the kingdom. This emblem appears to be taken from the twenty-second chapter of Isaiah, which records the vision concerning the city of David; *David* being typical of CHRIST, and the *city* of David of His Church, the Jerusalem which is above, and which is the Mother of us all. And the promise given to the Philadelphian Church has special reference to this Jerusalem. To see the appropriateness of the emblem, we would recommend our readers to consider attentively the passage from whence it is taken, in which the prophet describing the desolation of Jerusalem, and the vain attempts made by its inhabitants to rebuild it, goes on to speak of its restoration, when the custody of the treasury in the house of David passes from Shebna to Eliakim. S. Matt. xxviii. 18.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, (saith God,) that I will call My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah. And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Isa. xxii. 20.

S. Matt. xvi.  
19.

Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder: so he shall open and none shall shut; and he shall shut and none shall open." It is evident that Eliakim is also a type of CHRIST, and what Eliakim was to David in Jerusalem, CHRIST is to His Church. In the very names, Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, (which being interpreted is, God the strong, or the resurrection, the SON of God the gracious,) is contained the substance of the mystery; which is, CHRIST the powerful and Mighty One, who holds "*the keys* of the kingdom of God," and who exercises the power expressed by that emblem through His Apostles, as He said to Peter, "I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." The emblem of the key of David is therefore proper to this Epistle, which in its prophetic aspect, relates to the sixth period of the Christian age, when we are taught to expect the revival of that power and authority in the Church of CHRIST.

The emblem of the keys is also used in the introductory vision of CHRIST as universal Bishop, in which it shows His power over the *invisible* as well as the visible—over "Death and Hades." When He ascended into heaven, He exercised that power through His ministers: for in His Name they raised the dead and cast out devils. The use of this emblem in the Epistle to the Philadelphian Church is in accordance and perfect keeping with the promise made therein. Hence also the hope which has revived in these days of the resurrection, which the Church is taught to expect at the close of this period, at which close, it is believed, we are now well nigh arrived.

The words, "He that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth," connected as

they are with "the key of David," both in the Apocalypse and in the prophecy of Isaiah, express not only the obvious and universal truth of the Supremacy of Jesus, that "He is Head over all things unto His Church;" but also the particular truth, that from the House of God none can exclude when He openeth, and that into it none can enter when He shutteth. And this great truth has a special application to, and fulfilment in this period of the age. It is the time of shutting in, and of shutting out. Those who enter into the chambers of the house of David, will be hidden until the indignation be overpast. But when once the Master of the house shall have risen up and shut to the door, in vain will those who stand without seek admission.

Eph. i. 22.

Isa. xxvi. 20.

8. Luke xiii. 25.

The names or titles by which our LORD is designated in this Epistle, will, as we proceed, appear exceedingly appropriate to the condition of the Philadelphian Church, whose angel He immediately addresses in these words, "I know thy works: behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My Name." These words of approbation stand in striking contrast to the address of our LORD to the Sardian Church, of which He said, "I have not found thy works perfect before God." And by comparing the two Epistles, we find them differ very materially and essentially. The former was addressed to a people approved of men, but not of God; this is addressed to a people approved of God, but not of men. The works of the former were devoid of unity, having reference only to personal or individual salvation; the works of the latter proceed from a people united as members of one body in the holy

bond of brotherly love. In the one, there was no preparation for the kingdom, in the other there is the hope of it, and a pressing forward unto a meetness for it. In truth, the *works* of the Philadelphian Church are those pertaining to the kingdom of God—"Coming behind in no gift, waiting for her LORD from heaven," and to her the door of the kingdom is opened.

1 Cor. i. 7. "Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." The open door, in the first place, has special reference to the preaching of the 1 Cor. xvi. 9. Gospel of the kingdom. And we can truly say, "A great door, and effectual, has been opened unto us." For the Gospel of the kingdom which began to revive and dawn upon the Church at the commencement of this period, has at length been preached throughout Christendom. And the declaration of the LORD touching the door which He has opened, and the inability of men to shut it, has been a source of great strength and consolation to many of CHRIST's faithful servants. For when the Gospel of the kingdom was first preached, there were many adversaries who sought to stop the mouths of those who proclaimed it, and Satan strove hard to shut the door, lest men should see the glorious prospects revealed; and no marvel; for faith in the coming kingdom of our LORD, involves the faith that Satan's kingdom is drawing nigh to an end. But blessed be GOD, no power has been able to suppress the doctrine of the LORD's Advent; nor shall the door which the LORD has opened be closed till He come.

The "open door," in the second place, relates to the unfolding of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and the setting of His house in order. Therefore, in chapters iv. and v., which describe the true

order and constitution of His Church, it is said, "Behold a door was opened in heaven." Christian men having declined from their spiritual standing, have not beheld that open door; they have not looked through it to see the mysteries of the kingdom, nor the treasures which pertain unto the house of David, but have said that these gifts of God were for the first period of the Church only. But now, this door being again opened to the faith of the Church, we have seen that "the gifts and callings of God are without re-  
Rom. xi. 29.  
pentance."

In the third place, the "open door" relates to our entering within the vail, not in the spirit only, but in a glorified body. For when this period of the Christian age shall be drawing near its close, the dead in CHRIST shall be raised, and those who are waiting for Him on the earth shall be caught up together with them, to meet the LORD in the air. How blessed then, and full of consolation is this declaration of the LORD, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it."

The reason assigned for the opening of this door is next stated—"For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My Name." Here again, this period of the Christian Church is distinguished from the former; the condition of the Sardian Church being likened unto one *dead*, but that of the Philadelphian to one having *life*; for where there is strength, though but little, there must be life. Here are evident tokens of returning life—the coming up out of a death-like state into one of life, and joy, and comparative strength. The Church having but *little* strength, implies that her progress in attaining unto her primitive state, is *gradual*. For, as a man who,

through pining sickness, has been brought down unto the borders of the grave, recovers not his strength at once, but gradually; his members coming into exercise, and fulfilling their respective offices, only as his body increases in health and strength—"the sight of his eyes," the power of meditation, of speech, and action, being consequent, and depending thereupon; even so also is it in the Church. Her spiritual life and strength are not fully developed at once, but gradually; and as she gains strength, her members and office-bearers resume their wonted occupation. They are first seen in great weakness, having but "*little strength*." But that strength is spoken of in the Epistle with the assurance of attaining unto perfection; as it is also written by Isaiah, "They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up upon wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." In like manner also it is written by David, in relation to the same period, "Blessed is the man whose strength is in THEE, in whose heart are the ways of them, who passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. *They go from strength to strength*, every one of them in Zion appeareth before GOD."

Isa. xl. 31.

Ps. lxxxiv.  
5, 6

Another reason assigned for opening the door is the keeping of the Word of God—"Thou hast kept My word." The Church of Sardis was admonished to remember how she had received and heard, and to hold fast and repent; but here, the Philadelphian Church is commended for having *kept* the word of the LORD. They are not ignorant of the truth they profess to believe, but having a true knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, they keep the truth, and lay it up in



their heart, as Mary did, making it a life, and manifesting its power by doing the works of God.

The LORD also says, "*Thou hast not denied My Name.*" This, as we have already seen, is none other than the Name of JESUS CHRIST, concerning Whom the Revelation is given. He was known of old by the name "JEHOVAH," "the I AM," "the Rock of Ages," "the *Word*," "Immanuel," and many others, denoting His glorious person and work in fulfilling the eternal purpose of God. But when that purpose was brought into manifestation by the incarnation of the SON, His name was called "JESUS CHRIST;" a name so full and comprehensive as to embody all the former names. "He was called JESUS" at His birth, "which was so named of the angel before He was conceived in the womb." And when Peter confessed Him, He said, "Thou art THE CHRIST, the SON of the living God." Hence, as many as were received into the Church, "were baptized in the Name of the LORD JESUS." The angel of this Church being commended for not denying the NAME, we may infer that it was at a time when the Name of JESUS CHRIST was not held in its integrity and truth; and when one especial temptation was to deny it; few, comparatively, confessing that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh. Until this subject was brought before the Church in these days, it was not known how few believed in the true humanity of our LORD, or how many denied that He was in the truth of our nature *very man as well as very God*. And so generally has this heresy leavened the great mass of the baptized, that the Bishop of Rome favours the idea that the SON of GOD took not our fallen nature, by asserting that Mary His Mother was *immaculate*. But in how many ways is the name of

Ps. lxxxiii.  
18; Ex. iii.  
14; Isa.  
xxvi. 4; Isa.  
vii. 14.

S. Luke ii  
21.

S. Matt. xvi.  
16.

Acts viii. 16.

**JESUS CHRIST** denied. For He is not an abstraction, but a *person* ; neither is He a Spirit merely but a living MAN. And by “the man **JESUS CHRIST**,” shall the dead be raised, and all mankind be judged, even by Him who was dead and is alive again, and liveth for evermore. He is at the right hand of God for us, and is also present with us in His Church, revealing Himself unto us through His ordinances by the HOLY GHOST, shepherding, feeding, and blessing His people. Yea, “where two or three are met together in His NAME, there is He in the midst of them.” And who are they that deny not His Name, but those who

Vide S. John v. 27.

S. Matt. xviii. 20.

Vide Cant. i. 3.

Ps cxxxiii.

“dwell in unity and godly love,” and to whom “the name of **JESUS** is as an ointment poured forth?” Surely we may say of the Philadelphian Church in the prophetic language of David, “Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard, and went down to the skirts of his garments. As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion : for there the LORD commanded His blessing, even life for evermore.”

“Behold I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie ; behold I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.” It would be contrary to the analogy of this book, to interpret these expressions otherwise than in a mystical sense. The emblems adopted in this prophecy are taken from the Old Testament Scriptures, and are evidently applied to the spiritual Israel, that is to Christians who are the true spiritual seed of Abraham. The reason of this is obvious, because the prophecy con-

cerns CHRIST and His Church. And the Jewish Church, and worship, being as S. Paul declares, "shadows of heavenly things," their antitype can only be seen in the Christian Church; that is, in "the heavenly things themselves." "Those who are of the synagogue of Satan," therefore, cannot with any consistency be interpreted otherwise than to denote apostate Christians. To be *Jews* in the symbolic language of this book, means something higher and better than being the children of Abraham according to the flesh, even to be of that seed to whom the faith of Abraham was directed. Thus we read in S. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, that "when God made choice of Abraham, that in him and in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed, He saith not of seeds as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is CHRIST; and if we are CHRIST's, then are we Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." By those, therefore, "who are of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but do lie," are meant those who have departed from the faith of CHRIST, and who held not His Name in sincerity and truth, but hypocritically, and as a mere badge of profession. The synagogue of Satan refers not only to the Church of Rome, but to all who are shut up in error, to all who call themselves Christians and are not, but do lie, being Christians in name only, and not in heart and life, and who exclude from their communion those who hold fast the Name of JESUS CHRIST. Now it is said of these nominal Christians, that some should be brought to the angel of the Philadelphian church, and that they should come and worship at his feet, and be made to know the love "with which God had loved him." From whence we learn, that to the body of faithful

Vide Heb. x.  
1, and ix. 23.

Gal. iii. 16

worshippers over whom the angel of this church presides, shall many be gathered from the multitude of nominal professors, who shall unite with them in the worship of Him Who is holy and true. It shall come to pass, then, in the days of Philadelphian ministry, that a mighty and wonderful change shall be wrought in the hearts of many opponents of the truth, who have hitherto been shut up in error and unbelief, and a goodly company be made obedient unto the faith, who shall conform themselves in all things to the ordinances of CHRIST, under the superintendence of their angel or Bishop. Thus shall they come and worship God in the beauty of holiness, and in sincerity and truth, even in His holy temple, where His presence is realized, and where the Name of JESUS CHRIST is seen and felt to be a reality and a life; and they shall know that God hath loved those whom they once despised.

When, therefore, we view this prophecy as setting before us the revival of CHRIST's Church, its manifested unity, and the gathering together into its communion and faith, of many from Rome, and all other sections of the Church, who shall confess the Name of Him that is true; of Him Who hath come, and is coming in the truth of our nature; of Him Who is Holy, perfecting holiness in the saints; of Him Who hath the key of David, bringing as a Son out of His own house the treasures of heaven, and opening the mysteries of the kingdom, even of the New Jerusalem which cometh down from God out of heaven;—when, we repeat, the great things contained in this prophecy are considered, we feel assured that every spiritually minded Christian will concur with us, that such a witness to CHRIST has never been seen on the earth since

the days of the Apostles, and that according to the prophecy before us, the present is the period in which we are taught to expect its fulfilment.

The promise made to the angel of this Church, that those who were opposed to his faith and hope should come and worship at his feet, and know that the LORD had loved him, may imply not only a gathering unto the LORD now, but also that many shall be brought to the knowledge of the truth through the translated Church; and though like the foolish virgins, they will not be able to partake of that glory, the door being shut, they shall acknowledge it, and worship God in spirit and in truth, knowing that their faithful brethren who had before declared these things in their presence are with the LORD in glory.

“Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth.” The word of *My* patience relates emphatically to the hope of CHRIST’S appearing and kingdom, which is founded upon the express declaration and promise of our LORD recorded in the New Testament. Thus we read in the Gospel by S. John, “In My FATHER’S house are many mansions, if <sup>S. John xiv. 2.</sup> it were not so I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.*” In the hope of this glory, the LORD JESUS patiently endured the cross and despised the shame. For this He hath patiently waited for more than eighteen centuries; for He is not “slack concerning His promise as some men <sup>S. Pet. iii. 9.</sup> count slackness, but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should

come to repentance and live." The *keeping* of the Word of CHRIST's patience, implies that they hold it fast in the midst of much trial and opposition. They patiently endure, and wait the fulfilment of His Word, knowing in their hearts that not one jot or tittle of it shall fail. They hold the word of His patience as did the beloved disciple, who calls himself "Their brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of JESUS CHRIST;" or to use the words of S. Paul, "their hearts have been directed into the love of God, and into the patience of JESUS CHRIST." In like manner the same Apostle speaks in his Epistle to the Romans, "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." And that hope is *the resurrection from the dead*. "We who have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." As it is also written in another place, "CHRIST in you the hope of glory." The word of His patience is very precious to the Philadelphian church, and they hold it fast and keep it in their hearts by faith. And here we may again observe, that no period in the history of the Church from the days of the Apostles until now, answers, like the present, to the description here given; and further, that it relates to a period immediately preceding the LORD's appearing, is confirmed by the reward here promised,— "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." How wonderfully adapted is the promise to the condition of the Church! How suitable the reward! Because *thou* hast kept the word of *My* patience, I will also *keep thee* from the hour of temp-

Rev. i. 9.

2 Thess. iii.  
5.Rom. viii.  
25.Rom. viii.  
23.

Col. i. 27.

tation. The trial also is emphatically expressed—THE hour of temptation. The Church has already been preserved from many temptations, which have come upon the world, but this is called emphatically—"the hour of trial." The *nature* of the trial, and not the time of its *duration*, is that which is pointed out in these words, as when the LORD said to the unbelieving Jews, "This is your hour and power of darkness." The trial also shall be *universally* felt; for it shall "come upon *all* the world to try them that dwell on the earth." These peculiarities clearly indicate that the trial here referred to is that which will come upon the world during the reign of Antichrist—the unparalleled tribulation, which those only who keep the word of CHRIST's patience shall escape.

"Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Here again, we have additional evidence that this Epistle refers to the period in which we are now living, from the *fact* which no one can deny, that the cry is gone forth throughout all the Church, saying—"Behold the Bridegroom cometh." "The LORD is at hand, even at the doors." Such is the character of the preaching in these days, throughout Christendom. In every part of the Church there are some who believe that the period of the LORD's Advent is arrived: and many are "lifting up their heads, knowing their redemption draweth nigh."

Vide 8.  
Matt xxv.

The words, "Behold I come quickly," are accompanied with the injunction—"Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." This is very solemn; for it shows that to the very last the faith and hope of the Church will be assailed; and that to secure the unfading crown of glory which the LORD hath prepared for us we must preserve the truth invio-

late. The counsel given us to *hold fast*, or to grasp firmly with the strong arm of faith, implies a desperate struggle on the part of the enemy to take the crown from us. But if we are faithful and true, the LORD will strengthen us in the conflict, and we shall be made more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us.

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out : and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God : and I will write upon him My new name.” The emblem of the *pillar* is taken from the Temple of Solomon who built the House of the LORD, and set up pillars in it. He called the right pillar, Jachin, which signifies, “He shall establish ;” and the left pillar he called Boaz, i.e., “in it is strength.” Allusion to their typical import appears to be made in the sixty-eighth Psalm. “Thy God hath sent forth *strength* for thee ; stablish the thing, O God, that Thou hast wrought in us : for Thy *temple’s* sake at Jerusalem ; so shall kings bring presents unto Thee.” S. Paul uses the term in a spiritual sense, saying, “When James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be *pillars*, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship : that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.” Those who now overcome, shall have a prominent place in the spiritual temple builded by the true Solomon, God’s KING over His spiritual Israel. That which enhances the glory of the heavenly inheritance is its unchangeableness—“*he shall go no more out.*” Those who partake of that glory, pass into a state from which they

1 Kings vii.  
21 ; 15, 18 ;  
x. 12.

Gal. ii. 9.



cannot fall. Their inheritance is for ever, "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." 1 S. Pet. i. 4.

"*The name of My God*," is the name of love; for God is love. Those that overcome have this name written upon them; as it is also said in Chapter xiv., "They have His FATHER'S Name written in their foreheads." "*The name of the City of My God*," designates them to be of the bride, the same emblem being used in Chapter xxi., to describe the excellency, and superlative dignity and glory of that mystery. "I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." "*My new name*," is that of IMMANUEL; which as S. Matthew says, "being interpreted is, God *with us*," and relates to that great mystery of godliness, "God manifest in the flesh," realized now by all that believe in Him, and hereafter to be seen when they shall appear with Him in glory. Wherefore S. Paul says in his Epistle to the Thessalonians, "We pray always for you, that our God would count 2 Thess. i. 11, 12. you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, that the *name* of our LORD JESUS CHRIST may be glorified in you, and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God, and the LORD JESUS CHRIST." These three names embrace the highest condition in the kingdom. And the writing of these names upon those that overcome, stands in striking contrast with the judgment which at this period of Christian history will light upon the apostates, who have received the name of the beast, and his mark, and the number of his name; and show that the time is arrived when those who overcome shall receive their reward.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit

saith unto the churches." In this, as in all the Catholic Epistles, not only is the angel addressed, but every member of the Church is held responsible for duly apprehending the things contained therein.

Such is the spiritual aspect of the Church as set forth in this prophetic Epistle. Let us now proceed to consider the civil phase of this period of Christian history contained under

### THE SIXTH SEAL.

Rev. vi. 12  
—17.

12 And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

17 For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

This being the last of the seals in which any events are recorded, we should naturally expect to find in it, the termination or end of all that had preceded: and we accordingly perceive in our meditations on the symbolism which it presents, such momentous occurrences revealed, as can only precede an entire dissolution of the present condition of the world, anterior to the coming of the LORD. But like all the preced-

ing periods, this must have its commencement and close. And we shall find, as we proceed to read the revelation or opening of this seal, that such events have already taken place in the political world, as will fully justify our interpretation, although as yet, we have not seen the termination of these events.

The opening of this seal reveals "*a great earthquake,*" which symbol, interpreted according to our rule, must represent a great *revolution* among the *political and civil* relations of mankind. "The sun became black as sackcloth of hair." Sackcloth is a well known emblem anciently used to express extreme sorrow, and worn at the death of a friend or relative, or in times of great national calamity and trouble. The symbolism therefore, here used, represents "*the sun,*" or kingly power, not only as obscured, but as brought into the condition of one that mourns for the dead, and clearly points to those who having exercised kingly rule and authority, now mourn its loss as irretrievable, and bend over their departed greatness, as those clothed in sackcloth are wont to express their sorrow. *The moon*, in this civil phase of Christian history, represents the ordinances of the State. And it "*became as blood;*" signifying thereby, that the institutions of government ceased to give forth their light or direction, and that their life or power had also departed. "And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." Princes and Ministers of State, are here represented as falling from their places in the political heavens unto the earth; that is, unto the rank or condition of the common people. The occasion of their fall is expressed by a very significant emblem, even that of "a fig tree casting her

*unripe* or *green* figs (*marginal reading*) when she is shaken of a mighty wind." The fig tree failing to bring its fruit to perfection, considered with reference to the civil and political aspect of Christendom at this period of her history, aptly points out the absence of that vital energy or principle of action by which alone governments have hitherto been sustained, and for want of which the executive power has become abortive, and unable to withstand the spirit of the people, moved by Satanic influence, as symbolized by "a mighty wind." "And the heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together." This emblem strikingly represents the entire passing away of the original and political framework of kingdoms. The political heavens or ancient constitutions which had derived their power and authority from above, pass away as a scroll when it is rolled up; that is, they live only in the *record* of the past; they form the subject of history alone, and may be found in books, but no where else. "And every mountain and island were moved out of their places." *Mountains* are monarchical governments; and *Islands* those forms of rule which arise out of, and are sustained by popular opinion, even as an island is formed by the waters which surround it. These were all moved out of their places. They were not only changed in respect to their ruling power, but also in relation to their geographical limits, and boundaries. "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains." The seven classes of society here mentioned as retiring to the dens and rocks of the mountains, express the fearful effects of democratic opinion and violence. And

such is the consternation and dismay of those who have hitherto been sustained, as it were, by the constitution and ordinances of kingly government, that they become anxious to hide themselves in retirement and await a more favourable change, or else they join the dominant party, and so find a place of safety under a part of the mountain rock, which has been rent in pieces by these political revolutions. “And they said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?” In the midst of the terrible convulsions of Christendom revealed in the opening of this seal, men become conscious that a day of recompense and retribution has dawned upon them. They have heard of the coming of Him Who redeemed us by His blood—God’s righteous KING, Who shall reign upon the earth, and rule in righteousness—and fear has taken hold upon them, for they know in their hearts that they will not be able to abide the day of wrath and judgment which has set in upon the world.

We place the commencement of this state of civil and political affairs at the time of the French Revolution, A.D. 1793, when kingly rule was thrown down, and those who had exercised it were obliged to mourn over their departed greatness; and when all the ordinances and institutions which had enlightened and guided men before, were obscured, and no longer exercised their wonted influence and power; when princes and nobles fell from their places or stations of rule and authority; and when the ancient frame-work and policy of kingdoms and states, began to depart for ever from the sight of men, in future to live only in their

remembrance. And it is most true that every kingdom and state as it then existed has been changed both as to its constitution and geographical limits. Also many kings and nobles, and others who flourished under the old constitution of things have been driven from their thrones, and stations in society. Some of them have anxiously sought retirement, living in seclusion as private individuals, whilst others have taken a part and now occupy a place in those forms of government which have been substituted in the room of the former. And we know also, not only from the popular voice as expressed in newspapers, and from our own intercourse among men, but from undoubted information received from various sources in almost every part of Christendom, that a spirit of fear and alarm pervades all classes of society, from the highest to the lowest, "Men's hearts failing them for fear, looking for those things which are coming upon the earth." And these events, connected as they are with the appearing and kingdom of the LORD, have led men to conclude that the period of His Advent has arrived.

S. Luke xxi.  
26.

It appears sufficiently evident, that the opening of this seal can occupy no other period than the one in which we have placed it. We have, however, additional confirmation of the truth of our interpretation in the events connected with this seal, given us in the following chapter, from the first to the eighth verse inclusive.

#### THE SEALING OF THE REMNANT.

Rev. vii. 1—  
8.

1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.*

5 Of the tribe of Juda *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad *were* sealed twelve thousand.

6 Of the tribe of Aser *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses *were* sealed twelve thousand.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar *were* sealed twelve thousand.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* sealed twelve thousand.

We have in this chapter prophetic information, that before the close of the sixth period a means of preservation shall be provided for as many as will accept it, that so they may escape the judgments which shall finally come upon apostate Christendom, overwhelming men in utter destruction. The word angels, as we believe, no where in this book refers to celestial spirits,—but to a class of ministers, in the Church—who are the messengers of CHRIST, the Angel of the Covenant. Satan also has his counterfeits of this ministry. Hence S. Paul says, “that as Satan can transform himself into an angel of light no marvel if his servants do the same”—and this is spoken of men. These “Four angels” or messengers, “standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth,” represent an *earthly* agency and not a heavenly: for they are not the winds of *heaven*, which are symbolical

of a higher power, but "*of the earth*," that is an earthly or civil power. And running parallel with, and answering to this, we shall find in the ecclesiastical phase, that there are four forms of evil power which shall arise in imitation of the heavenly. That the four winds in the chapter before us are of the earth, but can be restrained by the heavenly might, is also shown by "Another angel," or messenger, "having the seal of the living God;" "ascending from the east," the region symbolic of power. He cries with a loud voice to the four angels, or inferior forms of power, and restrains them unto a certain time, or until a certain act has been accomplished. "The earth" is here used as a symbol of an established form of civil government in the midst of the people, of whom "the sea" is an emblem. The trees represent those who are appointed to rule over them, or the higher classes of society.

Rev. xi. 15. "The seal of the living God," which the angel ascending from the east is said to have, is also an emblem of the kingdom or kingly power and authority, as we have already shown; and its being called "The seal of the living God," evidently relates to His kingdom, and directs us to that period when "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our LORD and of His CHRIST, and He shall reign for ever and ever."

The nature of this seal, or what it is intended to convey, ratify, or confirm, we must learn from other portions of the Holy Scriptures; and as this book of the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST is a concentration of all that has been written, we shall, as on all other occasions, find ample information respecting it. Our LORD, speaking of Himself as the Son of Man, who



should give eternal life to them that believe, said, "*For Him hath GOD the FATHER sealed.*" The sealing <sup>S. John vi. 27.</sup> of the Son of Man was that act of the FATHER, by which He gave indisputable evidence or confirmation of His Divine mission, and showed Him to be indeed the sent One of GOD, the only begotten and beloved SON of the FATHER. For when S. John, the forerunner of our LORD, came preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, because the *kingdom* of heaven was at hand; JESUS, that He might fulfil all righteousness, came Himself unto John to be baptized of him; and when He was baptized, "He <sup>S. Matt. iii. 10.</sup> went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and John saw the Spirit of GOD descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved SON, in whom I am well pleased." By this *act of GOD*, in giving the HOLY GHOST unto JESUS as the Son of Man, was He sealed for the fulfilment of His mission, and also made known unto S. John as the Messiah, who should come into the world; as S. John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending <sup>S. John i. 29—34.</sup> from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him, and I knew Him not, but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the HOLY GHOST; and I saw and bare record that this is the SON of GOD." That which was conferred in this act of sealing, was the HOLY GHOST; and the truth confirmed by that act was, that JESUS was the SON of GOD. Respecting which truth, so solemnly confirmed by GOD's act of sealing the Son of Man with the HOLY GHOST, we may further observe, that the Apostles

1 S. Pet. i.  
16—18.

Rom. i. 4.

Acts ii. 33—  
36.

were yet more established by the testimony which the FATHER bore unto Him in the Holy Mount at His transfiguration, which had especial reference to the kingdom of God, when His SON shall be revealed “in power and great glory.” And S. Peter desired “that we should always have these things in remembrance,” adding, “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, but were eye-witnesses of His Majesty. For He received from God the FATHER honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved SON, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with Him in the holy mount.” There was also additional confirmation given of His Messiahship at His resurrection, as it is written—“He was declared to be the SON of GOD with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” We may also mention the gift of the HOLY GHOST on the day of Pentecost, which He, at His ascension, received of the FATHER for the Church, as affording incontrovertible evidence of His being the CHRIST of GOD. In allusion to which S. Peter said, “Therefore being by the right hand of GOD exalted, and having received of the FATHER the promise of the HOLY GHOST, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear, . . . therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that GOD hath made that same JESUS, whom ye have crucified, both LORD and CHRIST.” This “sealing of the Son of Man,” by which He was confirmed unto Israel, and empowered to do the will of the FATHER, had in all these instances especial relation to the kingdom of God.

Now, as JESUS, the only begotten SON of GOD, was

sealed of the FATHER by the HOLY GHOST, so did He ordain that those who are made the children of God by regeneration, should in like manner be *sealed*. There are many instances recorded of this sealing, and it is spoken of as the privilege of all God's children. Thus we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that when Philip (an Evangelist) had preached the Gospel in Samaria, and made many disciples, and baptized them, "as soon as the Apostles, who were in Jerusalem, heard of it, they sent two of their number, (S. Peter and S. John,) who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the HOLY GHOST; for as yet He was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the Name of the LORD JESUS; then laid they their hands on them, and they received the HOLY GHOST." Thus also on certain disciples, whom S. Paul found at Ephesus, (who had previously been baptized,) he laid his hands, and the HOLY GHOST came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied. And in the Epistle which he subsequently wrote to the Church at Ephesus, he says, "In whom, after ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." The sealing therefore of these believers consisted in conferring the gift of the HOLY GHOST, by the laying on of Apostles' hands. Without this sealing they could not be like unto the SON of GOD: they could not be as CHRIST was in the world; they could not in Spirit cry, Abba, FATHER, nor have the earnest of the kingdom in their hearts, nor long for the redemption of the purchased possession. In one word, without the sealing of the HOLY GHOST, the Christian calling is incomplete, as S. Paul testifies

Acts viii.  
14—17.Acts xix.  
1—6.

Eph. i. 13.

2 Cor. i. 21. in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, "Now He which stablisheth us with you in CHRIST, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

This sealing of the Spirit was at the day of Pentecost given directly by the LORD from heaven, without the intervention of any earthly instrumentality; for there were none who could be used to impart the HOLY GHOST, till He Himself had been given. JESUS alone could baptize with the HOLY GHOST, as His forerunner had testified. And that act of the LORD in giving the Spirit to the Church at the first, showed that He was glorified, and seated at the right hand of God. In like manner was the HOLY GHOST given to Cornelius and his household, that it might be made manifest that the Gentiles also were to be made partakers of the same grace, and fellow heirs with the believing Jews. The giving of the HOLY GHOST on these two occasions was necessarily a direct act of the LORD JESUS at the right hand of God. But there is no other instance recorded in Scripture of the conferring of the HOLY GHOST, save by the laying on of the hands of Apostles. That was ever the ordained means, after the Spirit had been given to the Church of CHRIST, whereby men should be sealed. We do not mean to say, that in the absence of these means the Church has not been the habitation of God through the Spirit; for God's promise hath not failed, nor hath He forsaken us. He hath not cast us away from His presence, nor taken His Holy Spirit from us. But it is no less true, that in the absence of the outward means ordained of God for sealing His people with the Holy Spirit of promise, the testimony borne to JESUS has waxed faint; the personal presence and

Compare S.  
Matt. iii. 11;  
S. John vii.  
37—39; Acts  
ii. 33—36.

Acts x. 44—  
45; xi. 15—  
18.

indwelling of GOD the HOLY GHOST, has not been recognized ; the consciousness of sonship has been clouded ; the life of CHRIST has not been manifested ; the hope of the resurrection from the dead has been forgotten ; men have ceased to love the LORD's appearing, or to desire that His kingdom should come. Such has been the condition of the Church during the absence of the outward and ordinary means of sealing. But now, towards the close of the Sixth Period of the Christian dispensation, when the Church is again called to prepare and make herself ready for the coming of the LORD, we have a prophetic announcement of the restoration of these outward and visible means of sealing. And we regard "the angel" seen in the vision before us, "ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God," as representing that power which God ordained and commissioned to seal His servants at the first. The vision clearly intimates, that another Apostleship must be raised up to complete the work which the first commenced. For unto His Apostles alone appears to have been committed the power of sealing men, and delivering them from temporal as well as from spiritual judgments. The Apostle proceeds :—

"And I heard the number of them that were sealed, and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand out of all (ἐκ πάντων) the tribes of the children of Israel." As the symbols of the Jewish Church and nation are used in this book in relation to the nations of Christendom, so the names of the tribes of Israel are here used to designate the tribes of the spiritual Israel ; that is, all Christian people. And as the twelve tribes of Israel are here mentioned to designate the whole community of Christians throughout

the nations of the earth, so the *sealed* number of an hundred and forty-four thousand, is intended to designate an *election out of* (ix) the baptized. The *sealing* is in perfect keeping with other events represented under these seals: for it evidently refers to the separating of a people from all the nations or tribes of Christendom, who shall escape the judgments which will most assuredly overtake those who are not thus sealed from them. The symbolism of the twelve tribes is used in this prophecy, because it was more in a *civil* than in an ecclesiastical point of view, that the children of Israel were divided into twelve tribes; for in respect to their *ecclesiastical* position, they had *one* place alone among them in which they could offer their sacrifices. Under the Christian dispensation, there is also an aspect of the Church, which may be called its civil or political aspect among the nations. In the providence of God, the Church has been united to the State; and the history of the one could not therefore be given without an almost constant reference to the other. It is under this view of the subject that the Church in the prophecy assumes a position among the nations; and a remnant of the baptized is separated from among them, who shall not go through the same tribulation as others who are not of this number, but be saved from it, and accounted worthy to escape all those things which shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man when He appears. The purpose for which they are sealed is described in the vision given in chapter xiv., where the hundred and forty-four thousand are seen standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, having His FATHER'S Name in their foreheads. And it is also said, "They were redeemed from among men;" that is, taken out from

among them, "being the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb."

It would be unnecessary for us to attempt to point out the geographical position of the twelve tribes of the spiritual Israel, in respect to their social standing, as we have not yet reached that point in the history of Christendom, at which they are distinctly to be seen. We only desire at this time to express our faith in these matters: believing as we do, that as other events revealed in this book have taken place under these seals, so will this also. We might however add, that there are indications of this purpose of God being fulfilled, and of His separating and sealing a people unto Himself; who shall be thus honoured in the day of His judgment.

The next vision recorded in this chapter is a revelation of subsequent events, which remain to be fulfilled under the seventh and last period of the Christian dispensation; and it is introduced here to present to the faith of the Church at the time of the sealing contained in the preceding vision, the innumerable multitude of the faithful servants of CHRIST, who shall be gathered out of all nations during the reign of Antichrist, and who having overcome, not loving their lives unto death, shall obtain a place and standing in the kingdom of the LORD.

#### THE SAVED MULTITUDE.

9 After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man Rev. vii. 9-17. could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12 Saying, Amen : Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes ? and whence came they ?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple ; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters : and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

This vision, viewed in connexion with the preceding, reveals to us most distinctly, that “the *sealed*” ones alone are they who escape the great tribulation under the personal Antichrist, which shall come upon the earth to try them that dwell upon it. It is said concerning the former, that the four winds were held till they were sealed, implying their preservation and deliverance from the judgments which were coming on the nations ; but it is said of the innumerable multitude in the fourteenth verse, which were subsequently gathered, that they came “out of the great tribulation ;” that is, they were of those who were tried and tempted during the time or period of darkness and oppression. The fiery judgment or hot persecution under Antichrist shall try every man’s work of what sort it is, and shall prove effectual to the separating of those who are the servants of God from



those who serve Him not. The vision of the great multitude standing before the throne, is a description of those who shall prevail to hold fast their faith, and not receiving the mark of the beast, nor the number of his name, nor coming under his influence, nor under that of the false prophet, in that last period of trial and conflict with the powers of darkness, shall bear a faithful witness unto CHRIST, and wash their robes from every spot or stain of sin, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. As the mystic number of 144,000 sealed ones of the preceding vision, are represented in the fourteenth chapter, by "the first fruits unto God and the Lamb," which shall be gathered unto Him *before* the tribulation, so the innumerable multitude in the vision before us are represented in the chapter referred to by "the *harvest* of the earth," and are described as being gathered during the dominion and oppression of the Antichrist. These servants of GOD having proved themselves faithful, and patiently endured for CHRIST's sake; and having cleansed themselves from all defilement through faith in His blood, shall attain unto the glory of CHRIST's kingdom, as it is here written: "*Therefore* are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple, and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." The tribulation they endured under Antichrist was indeed great, but they are now brought out of it; their former sorrows are entirely and for ever passed away, and turned into

joy. The blessings which are here bestowed upon them, as contained in the symbolic language of this prophecy, are suitable to such, and are in truth the reward given to their patient endurance and faithful perseverance.

That they are, moreover, united with the Millennial Church of CHRIST on earth, and form a part of it, is evident from their association with the angels and the Elders, and the four living creatures; and also from the song they sing conjointly with them, as stated in the eleventh and twelfth verses: "And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the Elders and the four living creatures, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

In this latter part of the vision, we are brought as it were to behold, what the Apostle saw in the prefatory vision to the seals in the end of the fifth chapter. For we have the same view of the angels, and of the four living creatures, and of an innumerable multitude, and also the same ascription of praise, with one exception only, where "riches" is substituted for "thanksgiving." This agreement would seem to indicate that the vision contained in the fourth and fifth chapters, was intended to cover and embrace the whole dispensation of the grace of God under this phase which pertaineth to the kingdom; and to exhibit His purpose therein. We may also gather from the association of these angels, with the four living creatures and Elders in their song, that they are a part of the redeemed Church: for we have already seen in our interpretation of the prefatory vision to the seals,

that the four living creatures and Elders belong to it. And we strongly incline to the belief, that throughout the whole of this book, we have no account of angels, as ministering spirits, properly so called: but that these angels are ministers in the Church of CHRIST, which the heavenly host are not. The heavenly host cannot sing the song of redemption as applicable to themselves: for CHRIST “took not on Him the nature of angels,” and we require a more definite designation of them, if these angels belong to the heavenly hosts, because the same word is used of the angels of the seven churches, whom we *know* to designate men. The *sevenfold* ascription of praise which is given by these angels, presenting that number which is applicable to the Church in its perfect and universal character, is a further evidence that they are ministers of the Church of CHRIST, and of the same order as those who are addressed in the Epistles. And from this we may also learn that they are heads of particular bodies, or churches of the saints. Heb. ii. 16.

The prophecy, therefore, contained in this chapter, embraces the whole of God’s elect people; or in other words, all the members of CHRIST, which shall be gathered out of the nations of Christendom, and partake of the glory of the LORD when He cometh in His kingdom.

The latter vision of the gathering out of all nations is prospective of events to be fulfilled in the seventh or last period of the age. And the preceding vision of the sealing of God’s people out of the baptized, having brought us down to the end of the sixth period of Christian history, in regard to its civil aspect, we proceed to consider its ecclesiastical phase as revealed to us in the sounding of

## THE SIXTH TRUMPET.

Rev. ix. 13—  
21.

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen *were* two hundred thousand thousand : and I heard the number of them.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone : and the heads of the horses *were* as the heads of lions : and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

19 For their power is in their mouth and in their tails : for their tails *were* like unto serpents and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood : which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk ;

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

The second woe trumpet in the order of our arrangement, has its place in the sixth period of the Church's history. And its application to our own times and the present condition of the Church throughout Christendom will be abundantly evident as we proceed with its interpretation. In order to this, we must first attend to the true meaning of its symbols.

Our attention is first directed to the golden altar which is before God, and is here used as the symbol of intercession. By reference to the book of Exodus, where we have a full detail of the different parts of

Ex. xxx. 1—  
10.

the Tabernacle and its service, we find this altar of intercession was placed before the second veil, and upon it Aaron was commanded to burn incense morning and evening, when he went in to trim and light the lamps. This altar had "*four horns*," and a horn in Scripture language is the symbol of power. "The voice," therefore, which is "heard from the four horns," must represent the *power* of intercession from the Church on earth, or rather from some portion of it recognizing by its outward forms such a service as that symbolized by Aaron ministering at the altar of incense; because, as we have before said, these trumpets represent the ecclesiastical phase or ordinance of the Church. We would remark also, that it is not said, a voice from the golden altar before God, but "a voice from *the four horns* of the golden altar." This power, therefore, must be of a fourfold character, or the symbolism would be unmeaning, and we must find in the Church something ecclesiastically corresponding thereto.

As it is of great importance that this should be made clear, we will go somewhat into the detail of things, and show that this fourfold form of power is inherent in the very constitution of the Church. We know from S. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, that the tabernacle erected by Moses, was constructed in all respects according to the pattern which God showed him in the mount, and that it was a shadow of heavenly things—a type of the Christian Church and of all things pertaining thereto. As for example, the light of the Holy Place given forth by the candlestick with its seven lamps, is symbolic of the light of the HOLY GHOST, in His sevenfold character, or as He is called in this book, "The seven Spirits of God." "The table of shew-bread" represents CHRIST as the true bread

Heb. viii. 5.

which came down from heaven ; and the golden altar on which incense, compounded of four ingredients was burnt, represents the office of intercession in the Church of CHRIST. As there is an outward ordinance in the Church for the giving forth of " the true light," and an outward ordinance for the ministration of " the true bread," so there should be a service answering to the burning of the incense, and S. Paul, in his Epistle

Ex. xax. to Timothy, speaks of " supplication, prayers, intercession, and giving of thanks ;" this fourfold form answering, as it were, to the four ingredients of which the incense was compounded. In speaking of the symbolism of the Holy Place, it should be remembered also, that upon the table were four kinds of vessels for the service of the table. There were also

1 Tim. ii. 1. in the centre shaft of the candlestick four bowls which would appear to be for reservoirs of oil for the lamps.

Ex. xxxvii. 16, 20, 25. Upon the golden altar, as we before observed, were four horns. Besides all this, the inner veil was supported by four pillars, the veil itself being also wrought with cherubim. We may also remark that the whole tabernacle was enveloped in four coverings.

Ex. xxxvi. 35. All these point out that there must be something in the Church of CHRIST corresponding in its fourfoldness to these symbols ; which, as we shall presently see, is a fourfold form of ministry and power. For if we refer to the New Testament Scriptures, we shall learn that the Christian ministry and priesthood is in its character fourfold. S. Paul tells us in his Epistle to the Ephesians, that when the LORD JESUS ascended up on high, He gave four classes of ministers ; namely,

Eph. iv. Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, and Pastors, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the Church of CHRIST, until we all come unto the knowledge of

the SON of God, unto a perfect man, unto the fulness of the stature of CHRIST. And in the Acts of the Apostles we find this fourfold class of ministries in active operation. The same ministry, as we have shown, is symbolized in this book by the cherubim.

Although these ministries have ceased in their recognized outward form for so many centuries past, namely, from the time that Apostles ceased, yet we know that they have to a certain extent existed under other names. For instance, we have had our rulers, whether they were Bishops, Kings, or Emperors. We have had our prophets, under the name of expositors and interpreters of Scripture; our evangelists, in the form of missionaries and preachers of the Gospel, and our pastors and teachers, in the *curés* and rectors. So also there has been a kind of fourfold division of Christendom in its outward body, viz., the Roman, Greek, Protestant, and Presbyterian—the last two, though united in their separation from the Roman and Greek sections, yet clearly distinct from each other—by their adoption and rejection of episcopal forms.

If we examine the subject more closely, we shall find that a fourfold principle of action enters into the very nature of man himself as originally constituted and formed by God; and as such, is carried out, whether in social or national relations.

These observations are sufficient to show that a fourfold form of setting forth the truth appears to be inherent in the very constitution of the Christian Church. But in order to a true interpretation of the prophecy, it is necessary there should be found in the Christian Church, when this trumpet is sounded, something answering ecclesiastically to this fourfold form. And it is a remarkable feature of the present times that

there has gone forth "*a voice*," or cry, throughout Christendom for the restoration of this fourfold form of power or ministry. Moreover, as we believe it is God's purpose to restore these ministries to the Church again for its perfecting, so we believe He has already given indications of their revival, although as might be expected, in a state of weakness, answering to the little faith and apprehension there is in the Church that such ministries are necessary for its perfecting and preparation for the coming of the LORD. We, therefore, believe that the "voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God," is at this time being heard, and is calling for the "loosing of the four angels bound in the river Euphrates," the other part of the mystery which has yet to be fulfilled.

To understand what the loosing of these four angels means, we must have recourse to other Scriptures, that we may learn from them the meaning of the mystic river in which they are said to be bound; remembering also that we are interpreting the symbols contained in this trumpet phase after an *ecclesiastical* form or manner; that is, as having relation to the outward forms and constitution of the Church as a visible body. The first mention we have of the Euphrates is in the second chapter of Genesis, where we find that the one river which went out of Eden to water the garden of God's planting was divided into *four* heads, and by these four was the fulness of that river poured forth—one of these was the Euphrates.

Cant. iv. 12;  
v. 1; Ezek.  
xxviii. 13;  
Rom. v. 14.

We learn from other parts of Scripture that the Garden of Eden represents the Church of CHRIST, even as our LORD Himself is the antitype of the first Adam placed in this garden. The four streams, therefore, would naturally represent those ministries in the



Church which the LORD gave at the beginning for its perfecting and blessing, and by which His fulness was poured forth, so that the Church of CHRIST, the garden of God's own right hand planting, became "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." We shall be confirmed more fully in this opinion if we consider the analogy which these rivers bear to the ministries of CHRIST. "The name of the first is *Pison*; that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havillah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone." *Pison* signifies *extension*, or *opening of the mouth*, and the ministry of Apostles is one of extension; by them new churches are planted, or set up. S. Paul says, "I have planted, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation." They have also "the care of all the churches," and their ministry extends throughout the whole Church, reaching unto and embracing all the baptized. It is remarkable that S. Paul uses the same expression—"O ye Corinthians, *our mouth is open* unto you, our heart is enlarged." And speaking of his commission in the tenth chapter, he says, "But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule," or line (*κανόνος*), "which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you." *Gold*, the most precious of all metals, is an emblem of *truth*; *bdellium*, pearl or crystal, represents the precious stones which are gathered out of Christendom for the temple of the LORD. *The onyx stone* was set upon the shoulder of the High Priest as an emblem of rule, as it is also written of our LORD, "The government shall be upon His shoulder." "*The river Pison*," therefore, "encompassing the whole land of Havillah," beautifully represents the office of Apostles, which is

Eph. i. 23.

Gen. ii. 11.

1 Cor. iii. 6  
and 10.

2 Cor. xi. 28.

2 Cor. vi. 11.

The best interpreters  
translate the Hebrew,  
"pearl or crystal."  
1 Cor. iiii. 12;  
1 S. Pet. ii. 8.

Isa. ix.

ordained to embrace and set forth the whole truth and counsel of God, and to rule and guide the *whole* Church. "The name of the second river is *Gihon*: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia." *Gihon* signifies *valley of grace*, also *breast* and *impetuous*. All these expressions are descriptive of the prophetic gift of the HOLY GHOST. The prophets both of the Old and New Testament, who were used by the HOLY GHOST to reveal the truth of God, were humbled before Him from a sense of His greatness, and of the grace given unto them, as well as the deep things of God they were led to unfold. Thus Job said, "I am full of matter; the Spirit within me constraineth me." In the thirty-ninth Psalm it is written, "My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned; then spake I with my tongue." Jeremiah also said, "His word was in my mouth as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." The word *impetuous* is also descriptive of inspiration, coming upon men as by impulse. *Ethiopia* signifies blackness or darkness. The river *Gihon*, therefore, "which compasses the whole land of Ethiopia," very aptly represents the prophetic office in the Church of CHRIST, as being ordained to reveal all things by the HOLY GHOST, even the deep things of God, and the mysteries of the kingdom; and this sure word of prophecy, unto which we are commanded to take heed, is also spoken of as a light which shineth in a *dark* place, "until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts." "The name of the third river is *Hiddekel*: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria." *Hiddekel* signifies a *sharp voice or sound*, and is illustrative of the preacher's voice or the ministry of the Evangelist who is com-

Job xxxii.  
18.

Jer. xx. 9.

2 S. Pet. i.  
19.

manded to "Cry aloud, and spare not;" to "lift up his voice like a trumpet, and to show the people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins." S. Paul, speaking of this ministry, says, (quoting the language of Isaiah and David,) "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things . . . . their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." The power of "*Assyria*" has ever been opposed to God, and is used in the Scriptures as a type of the infidelity which is in the world, and of the opposition of the natural man to the Gospel of CHRIST. The river Hiddekel which goes towards the east of Assyria, represents then the Evangelical ministry whose office it is to show forth the Gospel of the grace of God, and by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe, and to gather out of the world a people for His name, even as the LORD commanded, saying—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Accordingly, S. Paul says, "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, even our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." "The fourth river is *Euphrates*." The Hebrew name of this river is *Phrath* or *Paret*; the *eu* prefixed is a Greek particle, implying excellence. In Greek it is written Euphrates, in the Septuagint as

Isa. lviii. 1.

Rom. x. 15  
—18.

2 Kings xv.  
27—29; Isa.  
xi. 11—16;  
xxvii. 13;  
Micah v. 3,  
6; Ezek.  
xxxix. 3—9.

S. Mark xvi.  
15, 16.

Tit. i. 11—  
14.

well as in the Apocalypse, and signifies *fruitful*, or that *makes fruitful* or *growing*. The name also implies in the language of the country, *ablution*. This river, therefore, considered in connexion with the other three, is sufficiently indicative of the pastoral office. For it is the special duty of the pastor to purify and cleanse the flock, by the washing of water by the Word, and to feed them with the bread of heaven, that they may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST: or to return to the emblem we before used of the Garden of God's right hand planting, we may remark, that whilst it is the peculiar office of the Apostle to plant, it is the office of the pastor to *water* and *nourish* those who are engrafted into CHRIST and brought under His special care as a Bishop and Shepherd of His flock, that they also may be "called trees of righteousness," bringing forth much fruit, to the glory of God. We may observe also, that there is nothing said of the river Euphrates beyond its name, whilst the other three are explained by appropriate symbols connected with them, leaving us to infer that this fourth river, as symbolizing one of the ministries of CHRIST, can be applied to none other than the pastoral office. For these are the four ministries which God hath ordained in His Church for its perfecting. Now, though there can be no doubt that a measure of the fulness of CHRIST, which these four were ordained to administer, has been continued to the Church until the present time, yet there is only *one* of these four ministries which is recognized as existing in the Christian Church, and that is the *pastoral*. For though there are Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, they all belong to this class of ministry; and all the other ministries, so far as they are exercised, (for they *are*

Eph. iv.

exercised in measure) are now merged in the pastoral ; so that it may be called emphatically—"The great river Euphrates." Moreover, to see how this river is connected with "the trumpet" under consideration, we must also bear in mind that it was the only river which of old passed through Babylon, and Babylon is interpreted in the Revelation to mean mystically, the whole of Christendom. Therefore "the great river Euphrates" in its mystical sense, (which is the only sense in which it is used in this vision) must signify the Pastoral office or the ministry of the Christian Church, as it is now exercised in Christendom.

But during the sixth period of the Christian age, a voice is heard from the four horns of the golden altar, that the four angels bound in the great river Euphrates, or the Pastorship of Christendom, might be loosed. And we believe this loosing of the angels to be Satan's response to the growing consciousness in the Church of her need of the fourfold form of ministry ; he who was a liar from the beginning seeking thus to pervert the very truth of God, and taking advantage of the weak and fallen condition of the Church, to draw her into his snare, and tempt her to receive his lying counterfeit, instead of the true operation of the Spirit of the LORD in the revived ordinances of CHRIST. For we know there has never been any truth of God which Satan has not perverted, or any working of the HOLY GHOST in the Body of CHRIST, which he has not counterfeited.

Though we have not yet seen the fulness of this mystery of iniquity, yet we believe there are certain indications of it, as well as of the true and legitimate ministers of CHRIST, of which this is the counterfeit. If we are asked to point out such an indication of the

evil working of the enemy, we would mention the Mormons as an example, who profess to have among them this fourfold form of ministry, and who have already seduced thousands into their snare. There are also other indications throughout Christendom of a similar spirit, which are only cognizable to those who are watching for such signs of the times: for as yet this mystery of iniquity is only in its embryo state, even as we believe the ministries of God which He will raise up, are, as it were, hidden from the great multitude of professing Christians.

This manifestation of evil power is said to be, "for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year." These are expressions, which under some circumstances, might be referred symbolically to certain measures of time, but we do not believe they are here used so much in this sense as to indicate *the* time or times when this mystery of iniquity shall be revealed. In this point of view, the following passages of Scripture will give their true interpretation. "JESUS said, Woman, *My hour* is not yet come." "Woman, believe Me, *the hour* cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the FATHER." "*The hour* is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and they that hear shall live." "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow because *her hour* is come." "This is your *hour* and power of darkness." "I will keep thee from the *hour* of temptation." "For in one *hour* is thy judgment come." An *hour* is used in these passages to denote a period or time of visitation. So of the *day*. "*To-day* if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts," i.e., in this present season of grace. "He seeth that his *day* is coming." "In that *day* the LORD shall punish

S. John ii. 4.

S. John iv.  
21.S. John v.  
25.S. John xvi.  
21.S. Luke xxii.  
53.

Rev. iii. 10.

Rev. xviii.  
10.

Ps. xc. 7.

Ps. xxxvii.  
13.

the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.” “The *day* of the LORD shall come as a thief in the night.” “The *day* of Midian.” “The *day* of slaughter.” “The *day* of judgment.” “The battle of that great *day* of God ALMIGHTY.” In this sense also a *month* is used. “In her *month* they shall find her.” “Now shall a *month* devour them with their portions.” “Three shepherds also I cut off in one *month*.” A *year* also is used in like manner. “The *year* of My Redeemed is come.” “I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth, even the *year* of their visitation.” “For it is the day of the LORD’s vengeance, and the *year* of recompense for the controversy of Zion.” All these words, “An hour, a day, a month, and a year,” in the passages referred to, denote a special time or season, and in most of the references they relate to a time of judgment, when God will arise out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and to deliver His people out of captivity. But the wicked are prepared against this time of judgment, for it is evidently the last time or period during which God’s mercy will be held out to those who will repent and turn to Him, at the close of which the ungodly will be sealed up to judgment, having done despite to the Spirit of grace and forsaken their own mercy.

“And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand, and I heard the number of them.” The Apostle says that he heard the number of the Antichristian army; and he also states in the prophecy belonging to the same period, but under another aspect, that he also heard the number of the sealed host. And these two numberings clearly refer to two distinct companies, who will doubt-

Isa. xxv. 21.

2 S. Pet. iii. 10.

Isa. ix. 4.  
Jer. xlii. 3.

2 S. Pet. ii. 9.

Rev. xvi. 14.

Jer. ii. 24.

Hosea v. 7.  
Zech. xi. 8.

Isa. lxiii. 4.  
Jer. xl. 23.

less be both manifested, according to this prophecy : the favoured hosts of the LORD who shall come with Him ; and the army of Antichrist, who shall be destroyed, when He cometh with His saints to execute judgment. In respect to the number of the army of the horsemen, it is a remarkable circumstance, that not long since, and therefore during the time when this vision is being developed, the chief Bishop and head of Christendom, or rather he who has *assumed* universal supremacy over the Christian nations, has boasted in an official communication to those who acknowledge his claim, that he has an army of this number, or could call an army of this number into the field, namely, 200,000,000. And this is about the number also of those throughout Christendom, who confess him to be the head of the Church on earth. The intimation in the prophecy is no less remarkable ; for S. John says, “ I *heard* the number of them,” as though it should be a number to be spoken of rather than seen. And such an announcement from a person upon whose words and actions the eyes of Christendom are perhaps fixed, more than on any other, is an event worthy of the record of prophecy. We do well likewise to observe, that it is not said, the number of *horsemen* were 200,000,000, but the *army* of the horsemen were of that number, thus distinguishing the horsemen or leaders from the army.

Now to apply this number to the Turkish army, as some have done, is most absurd : for it is probably more than that nation could number from its very commencement, including every individual of it, much less had that nation ever an army of such a number. The inconsistency, also, of such an interpretation is apparent, from the circumstance that those who inter-



pret the vision after this manner, are obliged to accommodate it to their theory, as in the case before referred to, by making some of the symbols literal, and others figurative ; as for instance, the horsemen are interpreted by them to be literal horsemen ; the fire, jacinth and brimstone, representing colours, as denoting the costume in which they are arrayed ; the combined symbol of the " horses having lions' heads," and tails like unto serpents, with heads upon their tails, they explain as denoting literal cannons, which ought also to have the shape of a lion's head, the fire, smoke, and brimstone, coming out of their mouths, being in this case interpreted literally. And to render the inconsistency of this interpretation still more glaring, we find the same symbol made to represent horses in the sixteenth verse, and cannons in the seventeenth. It is also unfortunate for this exposition, that whereas in the vision these symbolic horses appear to be the prominent actors in the scene described, we learn from history that the cannon which they are said to symbolize, were not used till the taking of Constantinople, the very last act of the prophetic history ascribed to them.

Instead, however, of looking to the literal Euphrates, from whence these Turkish hordes are said to be loosed, we prefer the more consistent course of making the whole vision symbolic, and of looking to the mystical Euphrates as the source from whence the instruments of this *war* have their rise. And in so doing, we believe the symbolism will apply to the present condition of Christendom, especially to the western part, moved, and led on, as it is, by infidel men. In this point of view, " horsemen " represent those who lead on a host. Thus it is written of Pharaoh, " The

- Ex. xv. 1. horse and his rider are cast into the sea ;" the horse itself being a representative, as it were, of the host which is led ; and the rider, of the leader of the host. The leaders of this host are said to have " breastplates of fire, and of jacinth and brimstone ;" or rather, as the words denote, not the substances themselves, but *like* them—fire-like, jacinth-like, sulphur-like. "*Fire*" is the symbol, properly, of love—of the love of God shed in the heart by the HOLY GHOST ; and hence the HOLY GHOST is frequently represented by fire, because the HOLY GHOST is God ; and being partakers of the HOLY GHOST, God dwelleth in us. When the HOLY GHOST was given on the day of Pentecost, cloven tongues like as of *fire* rested upon the disciples. "God is love." "Our God is a consuming fire." "The name of our God is jealous," which belongs abstractly to love. Hence love and jealousy are used conjointly in the
- Acts ii. Canticles, "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm ; for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave ; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which have a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." This is its meaning in a good sense, but as all symbols have an application both to good and evil, or rather, as the abstract quality is moved and filled by good or evil, so here, it has only the semblance of good, and intimates that the men who ought to have on them the breastplate of righteousness, are wearing only as their defence an appearance of love. The "*jacinth*" is a mixture of blue and red ; which combination of colours would seem to indicate a *spiritual* zeal for what they deem *truth*. "*Brimstone*" is the symbol of spiritual death ; its vapour always destroys life under every form. These three symbols put
- Cant. viii. 6.

together, will bring out, in an ecclesiastical point of view, what chartists and democrats are clamouring for in the state, and will produce in the Church the last universal earthquake, under the three forms of fraternity, liberty, and equality, which evil principles will alike destroy the constitution of kingdoms, and all Church establishments. They say, "We can love as brethren, without a Church establishment. We can be spiritually minded, and have zeal for truth, without Church ordinances. We are by *nature* equal, and as *Christians* we are all equal, are all partakers of one Spirit, and have equal rights one with another, and therefore we need no rulers or any Church establishment." These fearful perversions of truth produce, what we may term, ecclesiastical death. Church establishments cannot exist any more than civil governments, if men maintain that all are equal, and all have an equal right, instead of recognizing the principle of God's government over them, and that He calleth and ordaineth some to holy office in the Church, which none others can fulfil. But although such is the cry, and defensive armour of the leaders of this host against the righteous ways of the LORD, they are themselves the most tyrannical of men, and are well represented as having the "*lion's head*," for they deliver forth their dogmas with the same authority as though they were sent of God as Apostles to the Church, and assume an equal right to guide and control men. They are also *false teachers*, having a *serpentine subtilty*, or semblance of truth in them; and these *serpent tails* having "*heads*," shows that they are heads to themselves, and acknowledge by their principles no headship over them. "Out of their mouth also issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone;" that is to say,

their zeal bears the semblance of love, (symbolized by the fire,) but their doctrines are those of darkness and not of light, being heretical and damnable, (represented by the smoke,) and they produce spiritual death (described as brimstone.) In short, these symbolic horsemen are Apostles of Satan, sent forth by him for the destruction of that outward fabric of Christian polity and government, which up to the present time, under one form or another, has ever been held sacred.

“By these were the third part of men killed.” This symbolism in the trumpet phase, relates to that class of persons who are the heads of the ecclesiastical body : for as the democrats aim at the destruction of all the upper classes of society who bear rule in the government of the world, so these spiritual leaders, or apostles of Satan, aim at the subversion and destruction of all rule in the exercise of the pastoral ministry in its three offices of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon. And the Pastors of the churches throughout Christendom, losing the power of rule, (even as the kings of the earth lose theirs) become ecclesiastically dead.

“And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands that they should not worship devils, and idols, and gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood, which neither can see nor hear, nor walk ; neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.” “Evil men and seducers, (it is said) shall wax worse and worse,”  
2 Tim. iii. 13. and S. Peter declares of such “they shall utterly perish in their own corruption.” So *devil-worship* will be the last form of iniquity into which men will fall ! As it was the last temptation which Satan presented to our LORD, so it is the last which he will pre-

2 S. Pet. ii. 12.

sent to the Church ; and those who abide not stedfast in the faith, taking shelter and protection under God's ordinances, will be led captive by him, and worship him as their God. And the personal Antichrist who will arise out of apostate Christendom to rule over men, being energized and indwelt of Satan, will direct all men to worship him ; sitting as he will, "in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." <sup>2 Thess. ii. 4.</sup> Those who repent not of their works go on into deeper depths of iniquity, robbing God of His dues both ecclesiastical and spiritual ; and destroying all discipline and authority in the Church of CHRIST on earth. This work of destruction, in ecclesiastical things, together with the idolatry they commit, their worship of the work of their own hands, their forms of service and doctrines, their boast of natural talents and endowments, together with their unlawful intercourse with the world, or spiritual fornication, uniting ecclesiastical with worldly things, conspire at this period to bring about the consummation of the mystery of iniquity. As the *former woe* arose from separating the spiritual from the outward ordinances of the Church, so this *second woe* as a natural consequence leads to the destruction of all outward or ecclesiastical form whatever.

#### PROPHECIES CONNECTED WITH THE SIXTH TRUMPET.

The prophecies contained in the tenth and eleventh chapters, to the fourteenth verse of the latter, are evidently connected with this trumpet, and require to be interpreted before we can proceed to the judicial phase of this period.

Rev. x.

1 And I saw another mighty Angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud : and a rainbow *was* upon His head, and His face *was* as it were the sun, and His feet as pillars of fire ;

2 And He had in His hand a little book open ; and He set His right foot upon the sea, and *His* left *foot* on the earth,

3 And cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roareth : and when He had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write : and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

5 And the Angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up His hand to heaven,

6 And swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever, Who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer :

7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets.

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go *and* take the little book which is open in the hand of the Angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

9 And I went unto the Angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And He said unto me, Take *it*, and eat it up : and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

10 And I took the little book out of the Angel's hand, and ate it up ; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey : and as soon as I had eaten it my belly was bitter.

11 And He said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

The whole of the prophecy contained in this chapter, and also in the following to the fourteenth verse, belongs to the sixth period of the Christian age. And we have herein plainly revealed that in this latter time, God will fulfil His eternal purpose which He purposed in CHRIST JESUS from the beginning : For He will restore His Church, and bring it unto the perfect stature

of CHRIST, and so prepare as many as will yield themselves to Him for His coming and kingdom. And for this end, He is represented as descending to the earth in a cloud with a rainbow upon His head. His face also resplendent as the sun, and His feet as pillars of fire, aptly represent the purpose He is coming to accomplish. The "*rainbow*," as we have seen in another place, is the symbol of the covenant, and as there is no bow ever seen in the heavens without a cloud giving forth its refreshing water, so is the cloud in this vision used as a symbol of that ministration of the Church of CHRIST, through which He gives the refreshing rain of the Holy Spirit; and by which His covenant is revived in the hearts of His people. For He comes to revive in their hope, and to present to their faith, that inheritance which He has prepared for them. The same emblem is used in the vision seen by Ezekiel concerning the restoration of CHRIST'S Church in the last days, and is described thus, "As the brightness Ezek. i. 28. of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD." "*His face shining as the sun*" represents Him not only as the Sun of Righteousness, coming to establish righteousness again upon the earth, but also as coming to manifest His glorious rule upon the earth, even as the sun is the ruler of the day; as it is also written of Him in the Psalms, "*His seed shall endure* Ps. lxxxix. 36. *for ever, and His throne as the sun before me.*" "*His feet as pillars of fire*" represent Him also as coming to tread down His enemies under His feet, and to purify those who shall be able to abide His revealed presence among them. The events symbolized in this vision are connected with the sixth trumpet, and ex-

tend unto the sounding of the seventh ; as the vision of the sealing under the civil phase is connected with the sixth seal, extending to the seventh. We believe, therefore, that the angel in this vision, personifying the LORD JESUS CHRIST, as the angel of the everlasting covenant, does not represent His literal descent to the earth, but presents Him in an ecclesiastical point of view as appearing in His revived ordinances, in analogy with the revelation made of Him under the civil phase of this period, as "the mighty Angel ascending from the east having the seal of the living God." This will become more evident as we proceed. "*The little open book*" seen in His hand represents Him as come to make manifest His revealed purpose, and to present His claim to the inheritance of all nations, as it is written of Him in the second Psalm, "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." "He shall be a Priest upon His throne." "His name shall endure for ever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed: and the whole earth shall be filled with His glory." As this revealed purpose of God is contained throughout the Scriptures, either by plain declaration, or in type or symbol ; and as all the light of God's Word is gathered up and concentrated as in a focus in this book, so we believe that the little book here said to be open in His hand, is indeed this Revelation, the prophecies of which He is now fulfilling. And we are the more confirmed in this interpretation, from the circumstance of its being declared to be *opened*, and *not* sealed. For when this book of the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST was completed, it was expressly said unto the

Zech. vi. 13.

Ps. lxxii. 17,  
18.



Apostle, "*Seal not* the sayings of the prophecy of this <sup>Rev. xxii. 10.</sup> book." A special blessing also is pronounced on those who "*read, and understand, and keep its sayings,*" unto which blessedness none could attain if it were not an "*open book.*" This little open book being seen in the hand of the LORD at this time, may be also regarded as prophetic of *the time* or period when this vision shall be fulfilled, and when the purpose of God revealed in this book shall be more perfectly understood: for though it was written for the instruction of the Church from the beginning, yet through unbelief she has failed to make that use of it which she should have done, and it has been to her in effect a sealed book until now when He is coming to possess the nations. And He set His right foot on the sea, and His left foot on the earth. This symbolic act represents His coming to claim the earth as His own inheritance. For not only redeemed man, the nations and their governments, represented by the sea and land, but the earth itself is His; as it is written in the twenty-fourth Psalm, "The earth is the LORD's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein." "And He cried with a loud voice as when a lion roareth; and when He had cried seven thunders uttered their voices." His crying with a loud voice, intimates to us that His voice is again heard in His true ordinance of rule in His Church; that is, in His *ecclesiastical* and not in His kingly character, for at this period of Christian history, He *prepares* His people only for the kingdom, when they shall reign with Him. The presence of the LORD, as represented in this vision, shows that He will be again heard speaking through the lips of that ordinance which He gave at the beginning for the rule of His Church; and of

which, as we have seen before, the *lion* is the symbol. This is confirmed by what follows : for it is said, "When He had cried, *seven thunders* uttered their voices." In these words we have again an ecclesiastical number, and an ecclesiastical symbol ; thunder being symbolic of the voice of God, in the highest ordinance of His Church.

"And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write ; and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not." We learn from these words, that the Apostle was about to write of this mystery of God, which should be fulfilled in the end of the age, or to tell out in plainer language the restoration of the Apostleship, by which God's purpose should be accomplished : for being himself an Apostle, he would understand the mystery of the seven thunders ; but he is commanded not to write them, leaving it to God to make known in *His* time what a second Apostleship should declare.

"And the Angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up His hand to heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be no more delay ; but that in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath spoken to His servants the prophets." Here we have another intimation of this purpose of God being fulfilled in the sixth period of the Christian age, in the further declaration of the LORD Himself lifting up His hand to heaven, and solemnly swearing that the time should be

no longer delayed : for such is the true rendering of the passage ; not that “ time should be no more ; ” but that when this period of Ecclesiastical history should arrive in which this purpose of God should be fulfilled, there should be no longer any let or hindrance, or time suffered to be lost in its accomplishment. It shall no longer be delayed. God, Who made heaven and earth, and the sea and all things that are in them, will hasten His work and cut it short in righteousness. We have then in this prophecy, not only the restoration of the Apostleship, in the sixth period of the age, plainly revealed ; but also the speedy fulfilment of all the purpose of God. And as it were to assure us of this, and to make it certain, it is also added, that “ In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets.” “ *The mystery of God* ” involves the perfecting of the Church ; consequently, if it be finished at the commencement of the seventh Period, that is, when the seventh angel begins to sound, it implies a prefatory work which has to be done before ; and of which the seven thunders contain the mystery. This as we have said, can only be made known to, and declared by those who standing in John’s position, shall occupy the place of Apostles in the Church at the close of the age and who are further declared to be associated with “ prophets ; ” by whom the Majesty of His purpose is made known. Vide Eph. iii. 5.

“ And the voice which I heard from heaven, spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the Angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the Angel, and said unto Him, Give me the little book.

And He said unto me, Take it and eat it up, and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey." Further proofs that the interpretation we have here given is true, appear as we read on.

For what the Apostle in this vision is told to do, and what he is here represented as doing, is spoken prophetically of the future, as it was not, neither indeed could be fulfilled in S. John. For we here learn that the prophecy relates to a period when a voice from heaven shall speak to those who at that time shall occupy and fulfil the Apostolic office, and direct them to unfold the book of this Revelation of JESUS CHRIST unto the Church; until then, it shall not be fully understood, because none but those standing in such an office can give forth its fulness, to the assurance and satisfaction of the Church. And when the Church shall earnestly desire to read and understand, and keep the things which are written in the words of this prophecy, then the antitype of S. John, in this vision, shall be seen to take the book, as it were, out of the angel's hand, and cause it to be read and understood by the churches. We repeat, that this can *only* be done by a ministry of the same standing as S. John; and as the vision pertains to the *time of the end*, it is clear that it cannot, by any possibility, have been fulfilled by him in his own person.

"And I took the little book out of the Angel's hand and ate it up, and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And He said unto me, Thou must prophesy again, before many peoples, and nations, and tongues and kings." The view we have taken of this subject is strengthened by observing the consequences of the symbolic act of taking and eating the little book, namely,

the going forth AGAIN, a *second* time, of the word of the LORD by Apostolic authority to the peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings of the earth, and its *effects* upon those who receive it. For truly, since the beginning of the age, or from the time of the declension of the Church until now, this book has not been read, much less understood, and kept; therefore it has been neither sweet nor bitter. It has not been eaten, it has not been the daily meditation, and delight of the Church, nor has the resistance made to its truth been bitterness to her soul. For while the knowledge of the mind of God, and of His purpose, is sweet to the taste, and delightful to the heart, yet it also produces bitterness of spirit, through the resistance which it meets from the careless and unbelieving, and the discernment which those have who are in the secret of God, of the lamentation, mourning, and woe, which must light on all who reject His counsels, and the operations of His hand, cannot but fill their hearts with sorrow.

#### THE TWO WITNESSES.

1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. Rev. xi. 1—14.

2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

3 And I will give *power* unto My two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy : and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

8 And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another, because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet ; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud ; and their enemies beheld them.

13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand : and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second woe is past ; *and*, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

The connexion between this and the foregoing chapter is very evident, and will, we have no doubt, be so considered by our readers, when they meditate on the following interpretation of the Prophecy contained in this chapter.

“ And there was given unto me a reed like unto a rod : and the Angel stood, saying, Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.” The *reed* put into the hand of the Apostle, accompanied with a command from the Angel to “ rise and to measure the temple of God and the

altar, and them that worship therein," is, as we shall presently show, a sequel to, or a fulfilment of, the intimation previously given—"Thou must prophesy again." The symbol of "*a reed*" is used by Ezekiel Ezek. xl. 5. for measuring the temple; and also in this book for Rev. xxi. 16. measuring the holy city. The reed given unto the Apostle in the vision we are considering, can be neither more nor less than the prophetic Word of God, by which all things must be measured. It is said to be like unto a *rod*, and in every sense in which we regard this symbol, it may truly be applied to the Word of God. In S. Matt. x. 10, the same word is translated a staff, to be used in walking; and the Word of God is truly that on which we lean for support in the weary pilgrimage of this life, as David says, "Thy rod and Psa. xx.ii. 4. Thy staff they comfort me." Again, in Hebrews i. 8, it is rendered "sceptre," a symbol of rule; and the Word of God is that by which the Church of God is ruled, especially when seen in the hand of Apostles as the ordinance which CHRIST has set in His Church for rule. Again, in 1 Cor. iv. 21, it is used as a sign of correction; and it is the Word of God which is given us for correction and instruction in righteousness, by which alone S. Paul sought to correct the Church, as is manifest in all his Epistles. Again, in Rev. ii. 27, it is used of the iron rod by which CHRIST and His Saints will break the nations, the iron rod being a symbol of human or fleshly power. And it is by the Word of God that the nations shall be broken, or ruled, who have rejected His truth; when the LORD comes out of heaven to destroy His enemies. And as the Word of God comes to us by revelation, so we have an indication here, that when the ordinance of Apostles is restored again to the Church, the

Word of inspiration or prophetic word is restored also.

Vide 1 Cor.  
ii. 16, 17.

The use which is made of it here, is to measure the temple of God, and we can be under no difficulty in understanding the meaning of this term ; for we are told by S. Paul, that the Body of CHRIST is the temple of the HOLY GHOST ; and we learn in this vision that they who are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit, are now again made manifest, under the direction of Apostles, whose function it is to minister the Spirit to the body, and who are God's ordinance, as master builders for superintending the progress of the spiritual erection, according to the heavenly pattern.

“ The measuring of the altar ” represents the setting in order of its service, and the restoring of that holy worship, which the LORD and His Apostles set up at the beginning. The *altar* in the former dispensation was essential to all divine service ; upon it all sacrifices were offered, as also meat offerings, and drink offerings, and gifts of the people. And as the ordinances of the law were a shadow of good things to come, of which the service of the Christian Church is the image, so the measuring of the altar indicates that a true order of service should be given under Apostolic direction.

“ But the court which is without the temple leave out and measure it not ; for it is given unto the Gentiles ; and the Holy City shall they tread under foot forty and two months.” *The court of the temple* was the place into which all the circumcised might enter, but none were permitted to enter the temple, save the priests, upon whom the anointing oil had been poured. In the antitype, therefore, they who

1 S. Pet. ii.  
9.



worship in the temple, represent those whom the Apostle Peter calls "a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people," even those who have received the HOLY GHOST as the anointing oil, who draw near unto God by one Spirit, as members of one body, and worship Him in spirit and in truth. These are designated in this prophecy as those who worship in the temple, they are at once the temple, and those who worship therein. Those who worshipped in the *court* were *not* necessarily priests, or the anointed, and therefore we understand the court to represent those Christians who have not received the anointing of the HOLY GHOST. For though in the Sacrament of Baptism we are engrafted into CHRIST, and thereby made the children of God, this ordinance does not confer "the gift of the HOLY GHOST," as we have already shown in our interpretation of the sealing in the seventh chapter. And by the court being left out and not measured, is intimated that a great multitude of the baptized world will not receive the gift or seal of the Spirit as the earnest of the inheritance about to be revealed. It is indeed a notorious fact, that very few to whom the idea of a restored Apostleship is proposed, have the least hope or expectation that such a grace will be ever again extended to the Church of God. And consequently, whenever such grace shall be manifested, they will be in danger of treating it either as a delusion or deception of the enemy. And although such a rejection arising, it may be, from careless indifference rather than wilful presumption may not involve the loss of eternal salvation, yet as that part called "the court" is not measured but left to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, it is evident that those symbolized by it

must come under oppression and trial in consequence of their exclusion from "the temple."

"And the Holy City shall they tread under foot forty and two months." The sudden transition of the metaphor from "the outer court" to "the Holy City," both of which are to be trodden under foot, is intended to show, that though "cast out," (πατήσουσι) they are a holy people, that is, a people in covenant with God, and in a condition like unto the foolish virgins mentioned in the Gospel, or the innumerable multitude, (of whom we shall have occasion to speak in the next period,) who endure the tribulation and oppression of Antichrist, and finally triumph "through the blood of the Lamb." By "the Gentiles," who shall tread under foot the Holy City, are meant those who have given up their faith in CHRIST, and forsaken the Holy Covenant, "for in CHRIST JESUS there is neither Jew nor Gentile." The outer court and the Holy City being trodden under foot of the Gentiles, shows that those Christians who hold fast their faith in CHRIST as their SAVIOUR, will come under the oppression of those in whom the Christian faith has no response; that is to say, apostates; men indeed, on whom CHRIST's name is called, but who are become reprobate concerning the faith. This view of the prophecy agrees with the vision of the seventh chapter, in which the sealed ones are distinguished from the multitude which no man could number, the former escaping the great tribulation, whilst the latter pass through it.

Vide Gal. iii.  
28.

The time of the treading under foot of the court and the Holy City, we are told is forty and two months; which *lunar* time has reference to the Church, and from the very character of the action here described,

would appear to be literal days: for if we are right in our general interpretation of the symbolic action of the two chapters, as having its accomplishment during the sixth period—and we do not see how it can be successfully disproved—it is impossible to believe that these are forty-two months of years. They may indeed have had a symbolic fulfilment after a shadowy form in the past history of the Church, but the character of the action here described, in connexion with the measuring of the temple and the altar, forbids us to suppose that it can be for the space of 1,147 years and a half, which would be about the time of forty-two lunar months, as each month is said to consist of twenty-seven days, seven hours, and forty-three minutes. It also appears to be the true view in which we should regard this number, from what follows concerning the two witnesses raised up of God to bear witness against the abominations and iniquities of the time.

“And I will give power unto My two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days clothed in sackcloth.” What these *two witnesses* are, we must learn from the Scriptures alone: for we have no other key to the mystery. The word *witness* in Greek reads *martyr*, and signifies one who gives testimony to the truth at the expense of his life. JESUS CHRIST is said to be “the faithful witness.” Rev. i. 5. He is so called not only because He revealed the truth and bore witness to it, but because He sealed it with His blood; and so became the faithful Martyr. But in this vision our attention is particularly directed to a double witness for God and His truth; thus we see in S. John viii. 17, our LORD speaks of a twofold witness, saying, “It is written in your law, that the testimony

S. John xv.  
26, 27.

Acts v. 32.

Vide Eph. ii.  
20.

Eph. iii. 5.

of two witnesses is true. I am one that bear witness of Myself, and the FATHER that sent Me beareth witness of Me." This twofold witness was continued unto the Apostles; as He said, "When the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the FATHER, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the FATHER, He shall testify of Me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning." This appears to be the same form of witness, referred to by S. Peter after the day of Pentecost: for when speaking of the crucifixion of CHRIST, and His Ascension to the right hand of the FATHER, he says, "And we are witnesses of these things, and so is also the HOLY GHOST, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him." This twofold witness appears to have been the privilege of every Christian who received the HOLY GHOST. The witness of the Believer was one, and that of the HOLY GHOST, Who dwelt in him, and spake by him, was the other. The twofold witness borne unto CHRIST in His Church, is then, the witness of man and the witness of the HOLY GHOST; and we are not aware that there is any other twofold form of witness mentioned in the holy Scriptures. These forms of witness should doubtless be expressed outwardly in the ordinances of Apostles and Prophets, who are said to be the foundation upon which the Church is built, JESUS CHRIST Himself being the chief corner stone. And S. Paul also speaking of the mystery of CHRIST, says, "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit." These witnesses are also called olive trees, and candlesticks.

"These are the two olive trees, and the two candle-

sticks standing before the God of the earth." The same symbolic language is used in Zechariah iv., where he speaks of a golden candlestick with its seven lamps, and also of two olive trees, which through two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves, and which he says are "The two anointed ones, (or sons of oil) that stand before the LORD of the whole earth." These two forms of witness are always united, both in the type under the Old Testament, and in the antitype under the New. "*The olive tree*," is the symbol of man in whom the HOLY GHOST dwelleth, and from whom, as an ordinance of God, the HOLY GHOST flows. Hence it is written in the Psalms, "I am <sup>Ps. lii. 8.</sup> like a green olive tree in the house of God." And the children of the blessed man who feareth the LORD, <sup>Ps. cxxviii.</sup> are said to be "like olive plants, round about his <sup>3.</sup> table." <sup>1 Kings vi. 31.</sup> The doors of the most holy place were also of olive tree. And S. Paul says, "Through CHRIST, we <sup>Eph. ii. 18.</sup> have free access by one Spirit unto the FATHER." The light-bearer or candlestick with its seven lamps, is a symbol of the Church, having the ordinances of God as He appointed of old. In this book of the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, we find the term used to represent individual churches; and we have also seen that the number *seven* is symbolic of one Catholic and universal body. In this vision, two are mentioned, but this does not militate against the application of the symbol to *one* Church, bearing a twofold witness: and in which these two ordinances are seen. The reason of their being mentioned as two, arises from the distinct character of the Apostolic and Prophetic ministries, as expressing the twofold witness of CHRIST, and because two are necessary to constitute a true witness to and for Him; and also to testify against the two

forms of evil manifested in the beast and the false prophet. The LORD's faithful witnesses will confront and testify against Satan in the beast which rises up out of the bottomless pit, and against the false prophet associated with him. For these two forms of evil by which Satan will work to perfect the body of the Antichrist of these last days, will be as perfect a counterfeit as he can produce of the LORD's witnesses in Apostles and Prophets. The time of the witness bearing, is said to be 1260 days; which we think must be taken as a literal number, for the same reason as we have assigned for the literal interpretation of the 42 months. And we believe that these two periods will be found not to synchronize with each other, but that the one will follow the other. In this view, it is remarkable that the number of days thus marked out for these two periods, if added together, would make as nearly as may be calculated with any accuracy, the 2400 years of Daniel's prophecy, which number is the Septuagint reading, and may ultimately prove to be the true one. The reason why the number is put in months in the second verse and in days in the third, arises from the circumstance that the symbolisms used of the Temple, the Altar, the Court, and the holy City, are all taken from the former dispensation, whose feasts were regulated by lunar time, whose light was reflected, and whose services were the shadows only of the heavenly, while the witnesses of the LORD here spoken of, pertain to *this* dispensation, (for we know of nothing answering to them as witnesses under the law,) and we walk in this age in the more glorious light of the Sun of Righteousness, the sun that ruleth the day; as it is written, "Ye are all the children of the light and of the day." And there-

<sup>1</sup> Thess. v.  
4.

fore the measurement of time may in all probability be computed by solar days.

Respecting the two witnesses, we may avail ourselves of Mr. Elliot's remarks, that the term '*μάρτυς*,' wherever it occurs in the New Testament implies *personality*; and we think also with him that they are a Christian ministry. We should not however call them "Ministers and Gospel preachers," as he does, but would rather say, they are Apostles and Prophets, whom the LORD will raise up previous to His coming, to witness for Him, as at the beginning of the dispensation. This interpretation gains confirmation by the power exercised by those witnesses, and the effect of their testimony : for it is said—

"If any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies : and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy : and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will." The *fire* which is here said to proceed out of their mouths, and to consume their enemies, cannot be supposed to refer to literal fire, but to that fire of God which fell upon the disciples of the LORD at the beginning when they were assembled together in an upper room, waiting for the promise of the HOLY GHOST, which came upon them in the symbolic form of "cloven tongues as of fire." And such indeed is the holy presence of our God when He comes into man to make him His dwelling place, that the enemies of God cannot endure to stand in His presence. For He who "is a consuming fire" is in their word, making it a word of power ; a savour of life unto life, unto as many as believe ; but of death

unto death, unto them that believe not ; consuming the flesh, and drinking up the spirit of the unholy and profane, who would presumptuously come before Him, as Ananias and Sapphira did, when they fell down at the Apostles' feet and gave up the ghost with a lie in their mouth. Such also was the power in the mouth of S. Paul when he smote Elymas with blindness. And for this cause also he abstained from visiting the Church at Corinth, lest the word in his mouth should be a word of judgment instead of edifying and building up. These witnesses also, "have power to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy." The rain descending from heaven is an emblem of the gift of the HOLY GHOST, and the power of conferring or communicating that gift in fertilizing showers upon the Church, was vested in the Apostolic office. For unto Apostles alone were committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven, so that what they should loose on earth should be loosed in heaven, and what they should bind on earth should be bound in heaven. Nor has God at any time committed such power unto men as He committed to the Church at the beginning, then manifestly built upon the twofold foundation of Apostles and Prophets ; which power He will again revive before He comes in person, to close the door of mercy and to judge the quick and the dead.

It is also said that these witnesses "have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will." Here we have evident allusion to the plagues which Moses and Aaron brought upon Egypt at the Exodus, intimating, that as those servants of God were raised up and sent to Pharaoh for the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, so these witnesses of the LORD come to fulfil a similar

Vide Acts  
xiii.  
Vide 2 Cor.  
i. 23.

Vide S.  
Matt. xvi.  
19. ,



mission, and to deliver the people of God out of the spiritual Egypt into which Christians have come, and from the spiritual bondage and captivity of the flesh, by which they have been held. The turning of the waters into blood, was the first plague which Moses brought upon Egypt, and these witnesses being said to do the same, and also to smite the earth with all manner of plagues as often as they will, shows how the judgments wrought then, will receive their antitypical fulfilment in these days. It is indeed as much as to say that the antitype of the plagues brought upon Egypt of old shall at this time be fulfilled, because it is *the time of deliverance*, and the *last* witness which God will give before spiritual Egypt be destroyed.

“ And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast which ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our LORD was crucified.” When God shall have prevailed to give such a witness before men of His holiness and truth, we shall again behold the same consequences follow as have ever followed a faithful testimony for God upon the earth. JESUS, Who was Himself the faithful witness or martyr, has had at different periods, witnesses for His truth, who have sealed their testimony in their blood. And under the fifth seal we find that the souls of the faithful witnesses from under the altar, cry to Him that their blood may be avenged upon the earth; and they are told that they must wait a little season, until their brethren or another harvest of martyrs shall be gathered: who, they are told, shall be persecuted and killed as they were. And it is only in this place that

we have the intimation from what quarter, and under what circumstances this persecution shall arise. From which circumstances it is also certain, that this is the last act of the spiritual drama before the vengeance comes: for it is after the second martyrdom that the saints are promised that their blood shall be avenged. And as the first witnesses were slain for testifying against the idolatry and superstition which had grown up in the Church around them, and especially in the Romish part of it: so these are cut off for their witness against the spirit of infidelity, which is now beginning, or rather advancing with rapid strides to overwhelm and subvert even the profession of faith in the Christian name, causing men to say, as Pharaoh did of old, "Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice?" In the light of this prophecy we learn, that Antichrist shall indeed have begun his work of destruction before the translation of the saints: for in the resurrection of these witnesses, and in their ascension up into heaven, we behold the fulfilment of that mystery of God in the first resurrection, which in the foregoing part of this prophecy is said to take place in "the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he shall begin to sound."

Ex. v. 2.

The exposure of these witnesses in the street of the great city for three days and a half, intimates to us, that the form in which their witness was manifested shall be put down, so that not only will they suffer martyrdom on account of their testimony, but all their religious services will be abolished by the spirit which will rise up against them. The time is said to be three days and a half, and here it might seem as though we were necessarily obliged to consider the days as symbolical of years; but regarding this prophecy as

speaking of a witness through *persons*, it is impossible to suppose the period to be three years and a half; for we cannot realize the idea, that dead bodies should lie in a street so long; and what would be incongruity in the letter, must also be so in the spirit. Besides, when these witnesses shall have finished their testimony, which is the last that shall be given to the Christian Church, the vengeance of God shall not be withheld any longer, the day of salvation being past, and God having arisen to judge all the meek upon earth.

“ And they of the people and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another, because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.” If it be asked, how shall these things be done in so short a time? a solution may be found to this difficulty in the rapidity with which intelligence is conveyed to all nations, which means of communication we may expect to see more perfectly organized before these events will take place. We may also remark, that even in the olden time, when the decree from Ahasuerus had gone forth to cut off a nation in a day, it would have been consummated, had not the providence of God marvellously interposed to withhold the execution of the deed, and the greatest empire upon earth, embracing all nations, would have been seen rejoicing over their victims.

We are fully aware of all the interpretations which have been given concerning these witnesses, and their martyrdom, and we have no doubt that at the French

Revolution of 1793, when the worship of the Church was suspended for three years and a half, by the infidel power which then rose up, trampling upon and rejoicing over all that had been sacred before, there was seen, as it were, a shadowy fulfilment of the destruction of these witnesses ; and the interpretation of a year for a day answers very well to the 1260 year-days which had preceded. It requires, however, but little consideration to see that this prophecy *was not*, nor *could be* fulfilled at this period : for this only happened in *one* kingdom, and not *universally*, as here stated. Nor was it true that all those who lived upon earth rejoiced over it ; neither indeed can it be at all affirmed, that these two witnesses then existed. For, it is inconsistent with true interpretation, to consider these witnesses to be the Waldenses and Albigenses, as they were not then in existence ; and had they been, the worship of the Romish Church against which they protested, was that which was put down, and not the witnesses themselves.

“ And after three days and a half, the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet : and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud : and their enemies beheld them.” In the first of these verses, we have the quickening of the witnesses who had been slain, and over whose dead bodies their enemies had rejoiced. The Spirit of Him who raised up JESUS from the dead, entered into them, and they stood upon their feet, clothed with immortality, and those who saw them were filled with fear : for it was an event they had not contemplated.

The voice which they heard from heaven, and their ascension in a cloud, evidently direct us to the same event to which S. Paul alludes in Thessalonians iv., where he says, "The LORD Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the dead in CHRIST shall rise first; then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them to meet the LORD in the air, and so shall we ever be with the LORD." At the time referred to in the vision, the LORD comes only within the region of the air, to gather His saints unto Him, that they may escape the judgments which are then to be poured upon those forms of evil which have slain His witnesses. They are caught up, or ascend in a cloud, a united body prepared for the LORD. It is said, Their enemies beheld them; implying that their removal from the earth, and separation from the Church militant by translation, will be manifest.

"And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand; and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven." *The same hour*, that is, in the hour when His judgment is come. A great earthquake, or revolution in ecclesiastical affairs will take place at this time. Looking upon *Christendom* as the whole city, the *tenth part of it* must relate to that portion of the ecclesiastical body who are the LORD's tenth or portion, and who are looking for the kingdom of heaven, and preparing for it; ten being the symbolic number of the kingdom. Hence the kingdom of heaven, at the time of the LORD's Advent is likened unto ten virgins, which went forth to meet the bridegroom. Isaiah, also speaking of this time, and of a great forsaking in

Vide S. Matt.  
xxv.

Isa. vi. 13.

the midst of the land, says, "yet in it shall be a TENTH," &c. This ecclesiastical body designated "*the tenth*," of which "the holy seed shall be the substance thereof," will on the removal of the faithful remnant by translation cease to exist as a corporate or ecclesiastical body. All of which is expressed by the tenth part of the city falling.

"And in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand." This number affords additional evidence, that the earthquake mentioned in this vision is purely ecclesiastical. The change wrought in the Church is so mighty and great, that the remnant are affrighted—become terrified. There are then, three classes of persons mentioned in this portion of the vision, viz., "The tenth," "the seven thousand," and "the remnant." *The tenth*, as we have seen, is symbolic of those who are looking for the LORD's appearing and kingdom, the whole of whose ecclesiastical fabric shall fall at the time of the translation, when the beast from the bottomless pit shall take away the daily sacrifice, and set up the abomination which maketh desolate. *The seven thousand*, we regard as that class, whom the LORD hath reserved unto Himself in the midst of the apostacy, who bow not the knee to the image of the great Baal, or Lord, who will command all to worship him; but who not being gathered and builded into a body, or prepared for the translation, are exposed to the rage of Antichrist, who will make war with them and overcome them: as we read also in chapter xiii., that he caused as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. And there is another class besides these—a *remnant* of the LORD's people in Christendom, who although faithful and upright men according to their light or place, are neither expecting

Vide Dan.  
viii. 11, 12.

Vide 1 Kings  
xix. 18.

nor believing in the coming of the LORD to establish His kingdom upon earth, and who will therefore be affrighted at the events which they shall then behold taking place on the earth, which is indeed the natural effect produced upon ignorant men, when they find things turn out contrary to their own belief and expectations. But when they shall witness these events, and discern them to be of God, they will acknowledge their error, and give glory to Him.

It is during this sixth period also, that the ungodly will be sealed up under condemnation: for now will all that are apostate in heart, and unrighteous in life, receive the mark of the beast, and worship him as their God. “Because they receive not the love of the <sup>2 Thess ii. 3</sup>—12. truth that they might be saved, but have pleasure in unrighteousness, God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Thus ends the *second woe trumpet* as it is here affirmed, “The second woe is passed: and behold the third woe cometh quickly.”

We may be supposed inconsistent in our interpretation in appearing to put the resurrection of the dead in CHRIST, and the changing of the saints at the end of the sixth period, and not under the seventh. But upon reflection it will be seen, that though there is an apparent, there is no real difficulty or inconsistency in such a view of the prophecy. For in those places of Scripture where the resurrection and changing of the saints are spoken of, the *detail* of events is not given, but only the great outline or principal features. The portion of Scripture where the events connected with the resurrection and the sound of the trump are most

clearly developed, is in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter iv., to which we have just referred : for there the descent of the LORD from heaven is said to be with a *shout*, and with the *voice* of the archangel, and with the trump of God. The shout is that of the saints in heaven, and the *voice* of the archangel is the voice of the LORD JESUS in His Church, by which the dead are raised, as our LORD says in the Gospel, “Marvel not at this, for the hour cometh when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth.” It is this same voice which in the vision before us, bids the witnesses ascend to heaven, and they go up thither in a cloud, as a body prepared for the LORD ; and this is AT the last trump ; that is, at the era of its sounding, namely at the closing of the sixth period of ecclesiastical history, when the seventh angel shall be about to sound : for at the time when he shall *begin* to sound, the mystery of God shall be *finished*. The seventh trumpet is the announcement that it is finished, and not the beginning of events which shall proclaim its accomplishment. Hence in the midst of the outpouring of the *sixth* vial, the LORD saith, “Behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.” The seventh trumpet does not give the signal of His advent—does not proclaim Him *coming*, but *COME*—it does not say the dead in CHRIST are *about* to be raised, but it says they *are risen*. We are further confirmed in the truth of this interpretation, from the circumstance, that under the seventh trumpet, there is no intimation of these things taking place then, but a reference to them as *having taken* place. It opens with a declaration, that the kingdoms of this world are become the king-



doms of our LORD and of His CHRIST, which is an event subsequent to the resurrection and translation of the saints. We do not think it necessary to say more at present on this point : for every one who is acquainted with the prophetic Scriptures, must know that events far distant from each other, are often viewed as one act. And here is one great use of the Book of the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, that it not only concentrates all truth, but unfolds all mysteries, showing the due proportion and sequence of events in detail. It brings distant objects near, and reveals their order and arrangement, and consequently the time or period of their fulfilment, which before were not discerned, neither indeed could be.

Having considered the ecclesiastical phase of this sixth period of Christian history, our attention is next called to its judicial aspect as revealed to us in the outpouring of

#### THE SIXTH VIAL.

12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river <sup>Rev. xvi. 12</sup> Euphrates ; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of <sup>-16.</sup> the kings of the east might be prepared.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of GOD ALMIGHTY.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

We have seen under the sixth trumpet that the loosing of the four angels which were bound in the great river Euphrates, has a relation to the loosing of

a fourfold form of power which Satan prevails to put forth, as the semblance of those four ministries of God, which he knows are to be raised up, to perfect the Church for the kingdom of heaven. The raising up, therefore, of such a delusion, and the gathering out of a remnant unto the LORD, are the events which will effectually dry up the great river Euphrates; or to speak in plain language, these events will destroy the influence and power of what remains in the Church, of Christian pastorship. And the effect of this drying up or taking away of the Spirit of CHRIST from the remaining ordinances in the Church, will be the preparing of the way for the manifestation of the rule and power of the saints, who shall reign with CHRIST at His appearing and kingdom. Preparatory to this event, there must be also a spiritual revival, which indeed we believe has already begun in the raising up of these heavenly ordinances, which are to prepare the faithful in the Church for the translation, or removal from the earth of that remnant, which shall be accounted worthy to escape the tribulation and oppression, which those must undergo, who are not prepared and made ready for the coming of the LORD, not having submitted themselves to His instrumentality for their perfecting.

“*Kings of the East.*” There are only three expositions or interpretations that have been given of these words. One that has prevailed among interpreters is, that they refer to the Jews, who shall be gathered at the coming of the LORD, and restored to their own land as the ruling nation on earth. Now though we believe that the Jews will be gathered as a people to their own land, either before or during the reign of Antichrist, we cannot see any propriety in calling them the kings of the *east*, as no one professes to know

where they are ; and especially as the LORD has said He will gather them from *all* nations, and from the *four* corners of the earth, from the east and from the west, from the north and the south. There does not appear, therefore, any propriety in calling the Jews the kings of the east ; neither when they are gathered will they be all kings. We also object to this interpretation, because we do not believe that anything relating to the Jews as a nation is *directly* contained in this prophecy, it being a revelation concerning the destinies of the Christian Church.

Isa. xi. 12 ;  
xlii. 9, 6 ;  
Jer. xlix. 14.

The second interpretation which some have given concerning “ the kings of the east,” is, that they are the ten kings who shall give their power and strength unto the beast, with whom they are to reign one hour. This interpretation appears to us also inadmissible, because we do not see how the east or sunrising can possibly apply to them, since their sphere of action or reign is not spoken of in this prophecy as being in the eastern, but in the *western* part of Christendom.

The only other interpretation left us, is the one we have adopted. And we have no doubt, whatever, that “ *the east*,” or sun-rising, in the symbolic character of this book, has special reference to that time when “ the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings,” and when the dead in CHRIST shall be raised, and that company of His saints shall be gathered unto Him, who shall be accounted worthy to sit with Him upon His throne, and be indeed “ kings and priests unto GOD and His FATHER for ever and ever.” The same metaphorical expression of “ *the east or sun-rising*” is used by David in relation to the same glorious and blessed period. “ He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of GOD ; and he shall

2 Sam. xxii.  
3, 4.

be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds ; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain."

Whilst the *preparation* for "the kings of the east" is going on, "three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet." These are called "the spirits of devils, working miracles ;" and it is declared respecting them, that "they go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather them to the battle of that great day of GOD ALMIGHTY." To understand the distinctive characters of these unclean spirits, and their working, we must recall to the remembrance of our readers the definition we have given of these three evil powers, symbolized under the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. In our interpretation of the twelfth and thirteenth chapters, we have shown them to be, 1st. Satan ruling invisibly, as it were, in the *spiritual* region of the Church. 2nd. Satan putting forth his power through the *civil* institutions of Christendom. And 3rd. Satan using the *ecclesiastical* form of the established churches. It is said of the first beast, that he receives his power from the dragon, that is, Satan ; and of the second, that after exercising all the power of the first beast, and enforcing his worship, he causes men to make an image to the first beast, which also he commands to be worshipped ; and it is under this image form of the first, he, that is to say, the second, will come out as the false prophet ; in connexion with this *last* manifested form of civil power, the septimo-octavo head, who goeth into perdition. Indeed, the ecclesiastical forms of Christendom, having been modelled by the State, the Church itself may be

considered as having always prophesied falsely before the nations, inasmuch as its constitution and polity have not been that which the Lord Himself ordained. This will be more fearfully evident when the Apostate Church becomes the prophet and slave of a devil-possessed man, who will direct it according to his will. The three unclean spirits like frogs, therefore, represent Satan putting himself forth through three powers or agencies among men, drawing them, as it were, by a threefold cord into that mighty delusion which shall come over all, and deceive all who have not the mark of God in their foreheads ; for it shall deceive, if it were possible, even the very elect.

Vide S.  
Matt. xxiv.  
24.

It should also be remarked, that these are *not* antagonistic powers, as some have supposed : for they have one purpose and one mission to fulfil, directed, as they are, by that master spirit, who is himself called the Destroyer, and whose main object is to destroy not only the souls of men by his delusion, but their bodies also by slaughter, in order that he may possess both body and soul. And he gives, under the sixth vial of God's wrath, a supernatural or spiritual power to men in each of these three vocations or positions, in Christendom, i.e., spiritual, civil, and ecclesiastical, in order that all who dwell on the earth, may be more effectually deceived thereby. Nor will there be any escape but to those who take refuge in that sanctuary of God, which He, in His infinite mercy and love, shall provide for them.

"The *kings* of the earth, and of the whole world," unto whom these spirits of devils go forth, appear to be those who shall in the end give their power and strength unto the beast, and make war with the Lamb : for they are said to be gathered unto the battle of that

great day of GOD Almighty. This affords another proof, if any were needed, that "the kings of the east" cannot be of the ten who gave their power unto the beast.

During the out-pouring of this vial of God's wrath, we have the most solemn and awakening announcement of the LORD's speedy and sudden Advent, "Behold, I come as a thief: Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." If any further proof were required that these vials are poured out *before* the coming of the LORD—at least the first six—we have it here in *the warning that He is about to come*. For it would be most inconsistent to warn us of His coming, if He were already come. It is most clear that the LORD does not come until this sixth vial has, thus far at least, been expended. And the only questions that can possibly arise are these—Does He come at the commencement of the next period; that is, when the seventh trumpet begins to sound, or have these six previous vials to be poured out after it has begun to sound, as some suppose? This question will be easily solved, by simply attending to the plain declaration of Scripture. From the expression used by S. Paul, that

1 Thess. iv.  
16.

1 Cor. xv.  
52.

"the LORD Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the *trump* of God," and the fact that this trumpet is called by the same Apostle, "THE LAST," we are led to infer, that the act of our LORD's descent, is the commencement of that period signified by the blast of the seventh trumpet; and if so, then the action of six of the vials must have passed, because we have here in the sixth vial, an evident intimation that He is *not* come, but that He is coming; and a plain declaration at the commencement of the action of the seventh trumpet

that He is come. Consequently the out-pouring of the seventh vial synchronizes with the events to be revealed under the seventh or *last* trumpet.

Strong presumptive evidence that the sixth trumpet synchronizes with the sixth vial may also be adduced, from the circumstance of the great river Euphrates being referred to in *both*, and also from the fact that the action of the sixth trumpet is a preparation for the last conflict between CHRIST and Antichrist, which is to take place under the seventh period, as we are told in the revelation of the sixth vial: for therein, that preparation, as well as its object, is clearly pointed out in the going forth of the spirits of devils unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, in order to gather together the hosts of Antichrist, for the battle of that great day of GOD Almighty. This synchronism is made yet more evident by the prophetic record of the catching up of the saints into heaven in the revelation connected with the sixth trumpet: for as we have already seen, that event will take place at the coming of the LORD to His Church, "at the last trump." And their being caught up to meet the LORD in the air is *preparatory* to their glorious manifestation as kings and priests unto GOD, spoken of in the prophecy of this vial. This is also in accordance with the *promise* of blessedness *herein* made to those who *watch* for the coming of the LORD, and who are keeping their garments in preparation for His coming.

The last portion of prophecy contained in this vial, relates to the place of gathering. "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." This gathering together is also preparatory to the organization of the Antichrist, or the united and confederate hosts of *Satan*: for *he* it is who gathers them by the unclean spirits mentioned in

the fourteenth verse, which intermediate verse is evidently parenthetical.

*Armageddon* signifies "mountain of destruction," also "mountain of delights," and "mountain of the Gospel." The comprehensiveness, or varied meaning of this word, is doubtless significant of the circumstances and events connected with it, and we may infer from it, that the place of gathering is in Christendom, where Antichrist will bear rule, and exercise dominion, the ten kings giving their strength and power unto the beast : for *mountain*, in the symbolical language of this book signifies a government. And as it is on apostate Christendom that the last act of judgment will fall, so here it is that CHRIST'S saints will be revealed in glory, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our LORD and of His CHRIST. The prophet Isaiah speaking of this last act of judgment upon the nations of Apostate Christendom, says, "The indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and His fury upon all their armies : He hath utterly destroyed them, He hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the *mountains* shall be melted with their blood. And all the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll ; and all their host shall fall down as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. . . . . For it is *the day* of the LORD'S vengeance, and *the year* of the recompenses for the controversy of Zion." The language of this prophecy strikingly accords with that of the sixth seal, trumpet, and vial, and indeed with the whole fourfold form of the prophecy of this period : for the Epistle speaks of a remnant which shall escape the hour of judgment, and of those that shall be made of the synagogue of

Isa. xxxiv.  
2-8.



*Satan.* An allusion to the name Armageddon may also be traced in Daniel's prophecy of the fall of Antichrist and his confederate hosts, when tidings out of <sup>Dan. xi. 44.</sup> the east and out of the north shall trouble him. For he shall hear of "*the kings of the east,*" or in other words, of the risen saints coming with the Lord to judgment; "and he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacle of his palace between the seas in the glorious Holy mountain,"—or as it reads in the margin—"the mountain of delight of holiness," "and he shall come to his end and none shall help him." For he shall fall by the sword of the Lord of Hosts as declared in the nineteenth chapter of this book. "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived those that had received the mark of the beast, and those that worship his image. These both were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain by the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

The place of gathering also, being expressly said to be in "*the Hebrew tongue,*" seems to suggest the idea that we should turn to the Old Testament Scriptures for prophetic intimations of this gathering. We have already noticed the prophetic word of the Hebrew Scriptures in relation to the events of this period: and in respect to typical *persons* and *events*, we may mention those of *Sennacherib's* host, of *Sisera*, of *Midian*, and of *Pharaoh*.

Isa. xxxvii.  
36.  
Judg. v.  
Judg. vi.  
Isa. ix. 4; x.  
24—27.

## PART XII.

### THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA. THE SEVENTH SEAL. THE SEVENTH TRUMPET. THE SEVENTH VIAL.

WE now enter upon the Seventh or last period of the Christian dispensation. And if we have been sensible of the holiness of the ground, over which we have already passed ; if we have trodden it with slow and solemn pace, expatiating on its fulness with gratitude and awe, as every footstep opened to us fresh mysteries, we are so far prepared to enter on the last scene which now presents itself to us, under that four-fold form of prophecy, which closes the present age. Proceeding then, with our interpretation of the prophecies belonging to this period, with the advantage of the light we have received, we commence, as before, with its spiritual phase, revealed in

### THE SEVENTH EPISTLE.

Rev. iii. 14—  
22. 14 And unto the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write : These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of GOD ;

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot : I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth.

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing ; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked :

18 I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My FATHER in His throne.

22 He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Believing, as we do, that the epistolary form of prophecy is so arranged and constructed as to guide us in its interpretation, the name of the Church to which this Epistle is addressed, first claims our attention. The name of *Laodicea*, like that of Philadelphia, is clear and unequivocal, signifying the popular voice or public opinion—the judgment and righteousness of the people. *Laodicea* is compounded of *λαός* a people, and *δικαίος* just—a people which justify themselves, a self-righteous and self-contained people. We may gather, therefore, from the meaning of this name, that the subject matter of the Epistle is to instruct and admonish a people who judge of the righteousness of things, not in the light of the HOLY GHOST, nor by the Word of God which endureth for ever in heaven, but by the tribunal of the people. The significancy of the name inscribed in this Epistle, in relation to the condition of the Church, will become more evident, as we meditate on what is written therein.

“These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.” This threefold title, by which the great Shepherd addresses

His last Epistle to the Church, is peculiarly applicable to its condition and to the things which are now to be fulfilled.

1st. The LORD designates Himself, "*The Amen.*"

By this title He was known of old. Hence it is written by Isaiah, "He that blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth, and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth," which reads in the Hebrew, "The God Amen." This name comprehends all fulness and perfection. As the Amen, He fulfils the purpose of God, and sanctions and confirms every truth and act in His Church.

Therefore, "When the four living creatures say Amen, the four and twenty elders fall down and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever." The word "Amen," is likewise expressive of the certainty of things; and in this sense S. Paul uses it in his Epistle to the Corinthians, "But as God is true, our word towards you was not yea and nay; for the SON of GOD, JESUS CHRIST, Who was preached among you by us, even by me, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea: for all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." The Amen being put in opposition to the nay, shows that it is expressive of immutability. Thus the announcement of the LORD's Advent at the beginning of this book, is confirmed by the words, "Yea, Amen." And the promise that He cometh quickly, is made sure in like manner, at the closing of the prophecy, "Even so, Amen." The Amen has also especial reference to God's *acts*. The Christian dispensation, properly speaking, is the age of realities and not of shadows or words only. It commenced by *acting*, even by that most wonderful and mysterious of

Isa. lxxv. 16.

Rev. v.

2 Cor. i. 18—20.

Vide Rev. i. 7.

Vide Rev. xxii. 20.

all acts—the Incarnation of the SON of GOD, which was followed by His death, resurrection and ascension, and the gift of the HOLY GHOST. And we know that He ever liveth to intercede for us at the right hand of GOD, and that to them that look for Him, will He appear a second time without sin unto salvation. Heb. ix. 29.

2ndly. The LORD designates Himself, “The faithful and true witness.” He takes this title, because it is the time above all others when it is necessary to be borne, and when nothing will avail any one, save a faithful witness; because by it alone will men be delivered from the universal corruption which surrounds them. As He, the faithful and true witness, witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate, so this, the last witness which will be borne by men to the world, must be borne as He bore it, by men who love not their lives unto the death: for now especially will that saying of our LORD be verified, “He that loveth his life shall lose it, but he that hateth his life for My sake, shall keep it unto life eternal.” S. John xii. 25.

3rdly. He is “The Beginning of the creation of God.” This designation of our LORD cannot of course relate to His Godhead, which had no beginning, but must refer to His Manhood—to that creature-form which He assumed at the first, before any thing was created, and which primordial form of being, in the fulness of time, was completed, by His assumption of human nature. It is to this mystery, the foundation of all revealed truth, that these words refer. Thus we hear Him speaking in the Proverbs. “The LORD possessed Me in the beginning of His ways; before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning or ever the earth was. When Prov. viii. 22

there were no depths, I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth : while as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest parts of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens I was there : when He set a compass upon the face of the depth ; when He established the clouds above ; when He strengthened the fountains of the deep ; when He gave to the sea His decree that the waters should not pass His commandment ; when He appointed the foundations of the earth : Then I was by Him as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him : rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth : and My delights were with the sons of men.” So S. John speaks—“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” He is also, the beginning of the new creation, though He did not appear to be so at His Incarnation. For that act did not change the nature of man. The nature which He assumed was not mingled with the Divine, but united to it. He was made under the law, which law did not change man’s nature, neither could it (“for it made nothing perfect,”) it only pointed out the way by which it should be changed. Therefore the LORD JESUS, as Man, having kept the law and fulfilled the righteousness of the law, proceeded to accomplish the perfect will of God, and was *baptized* ; and being baptized, He also received the *gift of the HOLY GHOST*, and was *sealed* of the FATHER, Who testified of Him as “His beloved SON, in Whom He was well pleased.” And He was made perfect, by His *resurrection* from the dead. His Resurrection was the first springing up of the new

Prov. viii.  
22—31.

S. John i. 1.

creature. Yet the life had been previously manifested and seen in His words and works, which testified of Him, for He spake the words, and did the works of God. Thus is CHRIST the beginning of the new creation. The new creature began in Him. He took of the old nature ; being “ born of a woman and made under the law ;” but through baptism, and the gift of the HOLY GHOST, He became the spiritual man ; and His natural body, which was “ sown in weakness, was raised a spiritual body,” and He came forth from the grave changed in His manhood,—The beginning of a new creation, “ The first-born of every creature.” Gal. iv. 4. Col. i. 15. When He ascended into heaven, He created the Church anew in Himself ; and filled it with the HOLY GHOST. We know Him now, as the Head of a spiritual body ; as the Second Adam, the LORD from heaven. In allusion to this great mystery of Godliness, S. Paul says, “ Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh : yea though we have known CHRIST after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore if any man be in CHRIST He is a new creature, old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new.” 2 Cor. v. 7.

The appropriateness of this title, by which our LORD addressed the Church of Laodicea, is evident : for it is under this last period of the Christian dispensation, that He is especially revealed as the First, or “ The Beginning of the creation of God,” of that new creation which is now, and henceforth to be manifested, that ultimate object which God from the beginning had purposed in Himself.

“ I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot : I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot,

I will spue thee out of My mouth." This reveals the condition of the Church, as wearing only the appearance of Christianity, professing it only as a form of religion, but not realizing it as a life. The nausea produced by things lukewarm in the natural system, is here used to illustrate the offence occasioned by Laodicea, and the cause of her rejection. The true meaning of these words may be seen by reference to Leviticus xviii., where the same metaphorical expression occurs, and where it is used to denote the casting out, and disinheriting of a people. The LORD declaring that "the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants, because of their iniquity," exhorts His people to keep His commandments, and adduces this as a motive, saying, "That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you. For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people." The words, therefore, in this Epistle, "*to spue out*," are expressive of an act of judgment—the dispossessing of a people of their inheritance, or depriving them of certain privileges by cutting them off from their more faithful brethren who keep the Word of God, and the testimony of JESUS.

"Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." The riches of which the Church of Laodicea boasts, is that increase of knowledge and refinement, that seeming godliness and wide-spread profession of Christianity, which she vainly imagines will constitute the millennial reign of CHRIST upon earth; and she so abounds in this kind of



riches, that she conceives she has need of nothing ; not knowing that she is spiritually wretched, destitute of that gold or truth of God that will abide His assaying ; and miserable, having not even that outward righteousness which men may look upon and appreciate, nor those ministries of CHRIST, wherewith she should be clothed, and made meet for the marriage supper of the Lamb ; and poor, having none of those spiritual gifts which make rich ; and blind, not having the anointing whereby she may know all things ; and naked, unclothed, and unseemly in the sight of God, not having the pure white robe of righteousness which designates the priestly character.

The things in which the angel of the Laodicean Church trusts, not being such as will endure the fire of that trying day, which shall try every man's work of what sort it is ; the LORD in His infinite compassion says, " I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich ; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear ; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve that thou mayest see." The gold tried in the fire is *pure* gold, the truth of God uncorrupted by the tradition of men, and free from the perversions of the natural or carnal mind—even that truth which has the sanction of the Amen. The clothing is that righteousness which is of God—the white raiment proper to the Priesthood ; and the eyesalve is that anointing of the Spirit in whose light alone we can see light, and discern the things of CHRIST.

" As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten ; be zealous, therefore, and repent." There will be a multitude gathered, whom the LORD loves, and who will endure the rebuke of His anger, and be chastened by

the rod of men : for not being prepared for the translation, they will be left to pass through the great tribulation ; having chosen, perhaps, to stand well with men, and to retain their position in society, and it may be, distinguished places in the established churches ; rather than by faith in the LORD, and obedience to His revealed will in His ordinances, prepare for Him, before the hour of judgment begins. As many as hear the rebuke of the LORD, and are chastened by the things they suffer, and zealously repent of their indifference to the warnings which had been given, and of their unworthiness, may even at that awful hour of judgment obtain the favour of the LORD, and be saved, yet so as by fire, and through His abundant goodness and mercy, attain unto the glory of the kingdom. This wonderful truth is confirmed by the following words :

“ Behold I stand at the door and knock ; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” Here again, the Epistle in its prophetic aspect, is shown to relate to a period subsequent to the translation : for it is at *supper time* that the LORD knocks at the door—the time of the celebration of the marriage supper of the Lamb, of which all His saints that overcome shall partake : for they “ shall sup with Him, and He with them.” The door which CHRIST opened to the Philadelphian Church at the time of His appearing, through which the sealed ones entered, and escaped “ the hour of temptation,” hath been closed. But there is another door now to be opened, and it is the door of the kingdom : for here He shall establish His throne, when He cometh with all His saints ; and to this remnant of the Laodicean Church, it is said that they shall partake of His supper ; which is an event

subsequent to the marriage, as we shall see when we come to the nineteenth chapter, where it is written, "Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

It is at the time when the LORD descends from heaven with all His saints to take possession of the earth, that this door is opened unto Him, whereof David also prophesied in the twenty-fourth Psalm, saying, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." Every one, therefore, in whose heart it shall be to open that door—every one, who in that day of trial shall bear a faithful witness unto CHRIST, and desire that He may come in His kingdom, and take unto Himself His great power and reign, shall partake of the blessing here promised, and shall sup with CHRIST, and CHRIST with him.

"To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My FATHER in His throne." We see in this last promise in the Epistle to Laodicea, the superabounding grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who, although He has gathered that sheaf of first fruits of the harvest who are with Him in the cloud, yet even under this last period of the Christian age, still holds out a promise to those whom He beholds passing through, and contending with the flood-tide of wickedness and spiritual temptation, which is now overwhelming all; that if any under such fearful and trying circumstances shall overcome, as He overcame, He will gather them unto Himself, even though it be the hour of judgment; thus exemplifying His saying, "Many that are last shall be first, and the first last." S. Matt. xix. 30. We are not to confound these, however, with the great

multitude, who shall wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb : as it is not every one who may be put in the position of contending with the powers of darkness, even as our LORD contended, and of overcoming, as He overcame. Their trial, as also their victory, is peculiar, as is evident from the promise made to them. For whilst it is said of the great multitude, that " they stand before the throne," and " round about the throne," the promise made to those who overcome, as our LORD overcame, is that " they shall sit with Him on His throne." It may be, that that promise is held out at the last extremity, to some who standing in prominent places in the Church, may be especially engaged in the final conflict with Antichrist, presenting themselves as witnesses before all men, and showing their willingness to give up their lives in " the defence and confirmation of the truth," as Ridley, Hooper, Latimer, and other faithful men, did of old under less trying circumstances.

The LORD JESUS overcame, and sat down in the throne of the FATHER. And the promise in this Epistle, that those who overcome, as He overcame, shall sit with Him in His throne, is a confirmation of the foregoing remarks which we have just made concerning such : seeing that it is to partake of the highest glory to which the creature can attain. For as none but He who is God can sit upon the throne of the FATHER, so none but those who are one with CHRIST, can sit with Him on His throne. As the throne of the FATHER is essentially *spiritual*, and comprehends all the incommunicable attributes of Godhead, so CHRIST as God sitteth on the FATHER'S throne, and exerciseth spiritual, universal, and unlimited dominion : unseen, though everywhere present : unfelt, though everywhere acting.

But the throne of CHRIST is the investment and exercise of that power which belongeth unto Him as *man*—of that government, and functional charge which belongeth unto Him as the CHRIST, God's anointed King, "which in His time He shall show, who<sup>1 Tim. vi. 16.</sup> is the blessed and only potentate, King of kings, and LORD of lords." As it is also said in another place, "God hath committed all judgment unto Him, because<sup>Vide S. John v. 22 and 27.</sup> He is the Son of Man." And again, "He will judge<sup>Acts xviii. 31.</sup> the world by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." The throne of CHRIST, whereof the saints are promised the fellowship, is visible, created, and comprehensible—that which all intelligences may observe and obey. But the FATHER's throne is invisible, uncreate, and incomprehensible; the one being essentially human, the other essentially Divine. And inasmuch as CHRIST's sitting with the FATHER in His throne, proves Him to be commensurate with the FATHER—VERY GOD; so for us to sit with CHRIST on His throne proves us to be commensurate with CHRIST as a creature—as MAN. "He, the<sup>Col. i. 13.</sup> first-born of every creature,"—"the beginning of the<sup>Rev. iii. 14.</sup> creation of God;"—*we*, begotten of God through Him—"created anew in Him," and made one with Him through the regeneration and indwelling of the HOLY GHOST; and being also one with Him in the glory of His resurrection, we shall be able to sit with Him on His throne, even as He overcame, and is set down with the FATHER on His throne. But on the FATHER's throne we cannot sit; for though we are made partakers of the divine nature through our union with CHRIST, we are not God. No worship or adoration is due to us, or ever will be; therefore to those

Ps. xlv. 11.

who shall partake of the highest glory in the kingdom, even that of being the Bride, the Lamb's wife, who shall sit with Him on His throne, it is said, "He is thy LORD, worship thou Him." He alone is GOD; and touching His *divine* nature, there is, and ever will be, an *infinite* distance between Him and us.

S. Matt.  
xxvi. 64.

Moreover, CHRIST being GOD, will *ever* sit upon the throne of His FATHER, who dwelleth in light, which no man can approach unto, *whom* no man hath seen, nor can see; for although when He cometh a second time into the world, He will sit upon His own throne—the throne of the Son of Man; yet He will also sit upon the throne of His FATHER, possessing the glory which He had with Him before the world was, as He Himself testified in the presence of the Jewish Sanhedrim; "Hereafter, ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Glorious truth! He will occupy both thrones, because He is both GOD and MAN. And as our elder Brother, He promises to them that overcome, that they shall sit with Him on His throne, which also is an *eternal* throne: for it is THE THRONE OF THE LAMB, who shall reign for ever and ever; or as the Creed hath it—"Of His kingdom there shall be no end." Having said all that our limited space would permit of the spiritual phase of this last period, we must now consider the prophecy which relates to its civil aspect, as revealed to us in the opening of

#### THE SEVENTH SEAL.

Rev. viii. 1.

1 And when He had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

The only intimation which we have recorded under the seventh seal is, that at its opening, "Silence is observed in heaven for about the space of half an hour." In order to understand this mysterious expression, and to see how completely it agrees with all we have said before concerning the seals, we must recal the recollection of the reader to the interpretation we have given of them, as having reference only to the civil aspect of Christendom in relation to the governments or kingdoms of the world. The "*hour*" here mentioned, doubtless relates to the same period referred to in chap. xiv. 7, where it is said, "the hour of His judgment is come," called also in chapter iii. 10, "the hour of temptation;" shown also in chapter xvii. 12, to be the time in which the kings of the earth exercise a power not given or recognized of God, but derived from the people, and used in direct opposition to the Lamb; and also the time thrice mentioned in chapter xviii., in which Babylon is judged—"in one hour is thy judgment come." The time specified in the vision of the seventh seal is *half* an hour, which intimates that the hour spoken of in the places above noticed is divided into two parts, during the first half of which there is a symbolic silence in heaven; and the question is, What is meant by this silence in relation to civil affairs or action? An answer may be given to this inquiry by reference to the trumpet phase which synchronizes with this period: for at the sounding of the seventh trumpet we learn that the time is come when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our LORD and of His CHRIST; and the voices heard in heaven announcing this event, we may suppose succeeded the silence noticed in the opening of the seventh seal, when this great change was contemplated by the hea-

venly host : for at this time, CHRIST has made His appearance within the region of the earth, to claim it as His inheritance. And it is remarkable, in connexion with these prophetic intimations, that when He comes out of heaven, it is said, “ He hath on His head *many crowns* ;” showing thereby that the regal power has entirely reverted to Him, a *crown* being the symbol of such power. This symbolic silence therefore in heaven, must refer to the LORD’s position in the air with His saints ; during which time, He is as it were, inactive, or “ keeping silence,” so far as regards the government of men, in consequence of His not recognizing any transactions in civil affairs as done in His Name, or by persons commissioned by Him, or who hold any power of Him or for Him. For it is said, that “ the kings of the earth give their power and strength unto the beast, and reign one hour with him.” During part of this time the LORD looks on, and is silent, as though He would see what His enemies would do, or while He is gathering His saints who are on the earth unto Himself. We therefore understand the expression to mean, that at this time, there is no authorized power upon earth ruling for Him, or acting under Him ; which circumstance is worthy of particular attention, for in all former periods they have so ruled ; the powers that then were, being ordained of God ; and until the personal Antichrist shall be revealed, exercising the power from beneath, and exalting himself above all that is called God, the civil power will be recognized by the LORD, as ordained of God. But as there is no mention of the exercise of such power under this seal, it is evident that the powers which were originally ordained of God, and which have been until now acknowledged in heaven and earth, have passed



away—that those who now reign are His avowed and direct antagonists, and that the LORD cometh to put them down, and to take unto Himself His great power and reign.

This interpretation will receive additional confirmation, by considering the Ecclesiastical phase of this last period of Christian history, as revealed to us in

### THE SEVENTH TRUMPET.

15 And the seventh angel sounded ; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the* kingdoms of our LORD and of His CHRIST : and He shall reign for ever and ever. Rev. xi. 15  
—19.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before GOD on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped GOD,

17 Saying, We give Thee thanks, O LORD GOD Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come ; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned.

18 And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldst give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy Name, small and great ; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.

19 And the temple of GOD was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament : and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

The third woe trumpet includes the period of the end, or all the acts or judgments of the LORD, from the taking up of the witnesses, to the establishment of His kingdom. As it was intimated under the seventh seal, so the LORD is here announced as having taken unto Himself His great power to reign on the earth. But before this can be done, He must gather His saints, and clear the earth of His enemies. The seventh trumpet includes the time that He shall be engaged

in doing this. “ *The great voices in heaven* ” can be none other than the rejoicing of the gathered saints, who in the fourteenth chapter, under the symbol of the 144,000, sing the new song which those only can learn who have been redeemed from the earth ; and they rejoice that the LORD has taken to Himself His great power, because they delight in His righteous judgments ; knowing also that the time is come, when they shall reign with Him upon the earth, as kings and priests unto GOD and His FATHER for ever.

“ And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give Thee thanks, O LORD God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come ; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power and hast reigned.” We learn from this portion of the prophetic vision, that “ The mystery of God ” in His Church is completed, as was foreshown in the prefatory visions to the seals : for we find that the four and twenty seats are occupied or filled, showing thereby, as we conceive, that God hath accomplished the number of His Elect under His twofold Apostleship, who are here introduced as rulers together with Him. It is also remarkable that the two phases, namely, the civil and ecclesiastical, which have hitherto been distinct, are here notified as being merged into one, by which it is manifest that He is come in whom alone they can be united ; viz., The King and Priest after the order of Melchisedec. And these four and twenty Elders worship Him and give glory to Him. The manifestation of His glorious kingdom, wherein He sitteth as Priest upon His throne, is no longer an event to be anticipated, but one to be rejoiced in as having actually commenced. The first act of His reign is here repre-

sented to be the breaking of the nations ; as it is written of Him in the second Psalm, where David, speaking of the wicked confederacy of the last days, says, " He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh : the LORD shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure. . . . Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." This prophecy exactly answers to the position which things shall assume upon the earth in the seventh and last period of the Christian age. For this confederate body, which shall then be gathered together, against the LORD and against His anointed, under the beast and false prophet, shall be destroyed by the LORD from heaven, at Armageddon, in that great day of the battle of God Almighty, and they shall be cast alive into the lake of fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

" And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints and to those that fear Thy Name, small and great : and shouldest destroy them that destroy the earth." At this time will be the resurrection of those saints who did not attain to the anointing and yet have looked forward to, and loved the appearing of the LORD ; they shall stand in their lot, or in their respective bands, and shall receive their reward according to their works in their day and generation—the prophets, and saints, and those that feared His Name, both small and great : while those who have corrupted the earth shall be destroyed. We may also observe (judging by analogy,) that the persons last referred to, are probably such as

have been pre-eminent in opposing the truth, and corrupting the earth in all generations; for they are spoken of in connexion with the judgments upon the dead. We read in Daniel xii., which relates to this period, that "Many of those which sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Here it may be observed that we have the partitive *some* used, intimating plainly, that the number named does not include all the dead, but only part of them. And we have here, side by side with the righteous who are raised, a band of the wicked dead, who no doubt have merited a pre-eminence in condemnation, even as the others are counted worthy to precede their brethren, and to be of the first resurrection unto eternal life. Another argument in favour of this view, may be drawn from the circumstance, that the Host of the LORD, who come out of heaven to war with the beast and the false prophet, are His raised saints, and consequently have passed through death. And it is a presumption hardly to be conceived that men in mortal bodies should be arrayed against those who are raised from the dead, over whom death hath no more power. The punishment also which is awarded to those who make this desperate attempt to overcome *Him* Who thus appears to claim His inheritance, and whose right it is, confirms the idea; for the award that is given them is called "*the second death*," a term which would seem to imply that they have passed through the first. We know that these terms may receive another interpretation, and be applied to those among the baptized who having been quickened from a state of death in trespasses and sins, have apostatized from the faith of CHRIST, and become again spiritually dead, and there-

fore, to use the words of S. Jude, "twice dead," and who pass into irretrievable perdition. While we believe that such an application of the text is true, and certainly included in the mystery of "the second death," yet we do not see that this at all militates against the idea we have presented, that some of the company or body of persons symbolized by the beast and false prophet, have also passed through natural death, and been raised again to this condemnation ; for these symbols do not represent individual persons, but organized constitutions of men, under their respective leaders.

"And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament. And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." The last act related in this prophecy, is the opening of the temple of God, exhibiting to view the Ark of His Testament. We believe that this event is synchronous with chapter xix. 11—14, where the LORD is represented as coming out of heaven with His saints ; "the temple of God" being, as we have before shown, an emblem of His saints united together as one body. "The Ark of His testament," upon which the cherubim rested, is also symbolic of Himself, as the cherubim are of those who minister before Him. The metaphorical expression therefore, of the opening of the Temple of God in heaven, points to the glorious "manifestation of the sons of God," to that time when "The LORD our GOD shall come and all His saints Zech. xiv. 5. with Him." This also appears evident from the symbolic action here related—"the lightnings, and voices, and thunderings," which are manifestations of the operations, and powers of the HOLY GHOST, whose

dwelling place is this temple : for this body of saints is the temple of the HOLY GHOST, an habitation of God through the Spirit. The putting down of all rule, authority, and power,—the destruction of the forms of evil which have so long wrought in the Church, and of them which destroy the earth, is accomplished by the Spirit of the LORD in His saints, and by the power of the HOLY GHOST. The weapons used by the saints of GOD are not carnal, but spiritual. It is no earthly or fleshly conflict, in which they engage. They fight not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. As the word of the LORD, in their mouth, had power aforetime to create and to edify, so now hath it power to destroy and consume ; and the enemies of the LORD shall fall before them, and perish with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the LORD, and from the glory of His power ; or as S. Paul expresses it in his Epistle to the Thessalonians, saying, “ Whom the LORD shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming.”

2 Thess. ii.  
8.

The “ *earthquake* ” relates to that last revolution, or change, which shall take place upon the earth preparatory to the establishment of CHRIST’S kingdom. And the “ *hail* ” signifies that the word, which otherwise falls like rain to refresh and fertilize the inheritance of the LORD, is now a word of condemnation and judgment, which shall overtake and fall upon the head of the wicked. And thus endeth the third woe trumpet. The judgment which awaits the ungodly at this last period of the age, is more especially given us in the judicial phase of this fourfold form of prophecy, under

## THE SEVENTH VIAL.

17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven from the throne, saying, It is done. Rev. xvi.  
17-21.

18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great.

19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.

20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every stone* about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

In entering upon the interpretation of this seventh vial, we are immediately struck with the similarity of its action to that of the latter part of the seventh trumpet, and the synchronism of its symbolization. In both, we have "the temple of heaven" mentioned, and also "the lightnings, and thunders, and voices, and earthquake, and hail." This, however, being purely the judicial phase, there are some additional notices given concerning their action, which could not well be shown in the ecclesiastical alone, as the dividing of the City into three parts by the earthquake, the wrath poured upon Babylon, and the amount of the judgment in the weight of the hailstones.

This last vial of judgment is said to be "*poured out into the air.*" The *air* is the symbol of the spiritual part of man. In other words, it is symbolic of the region of his spirit as distinct from his mind and body. And it intimates, that the judgment or vial of wrath

now poured out, is of a higher form or character than any that has hitherto been inflicted, being of a more spiritual nature—a judgment in which Satan, as a spirit, is more especially concerned, who is called emphatically, “the prince of the power of the air.” We do *not* consider that the symbol of *the air*, here given, is used to denote universality of judgment, as some have supposed ; because we are not aware that it is ever used in that sense in the Scriptures. And *if* it were so used, it could not be thus applied here : for the judgment being confined to that part of the world, which is properly called Christendom, cannot be universal in the sense of affecting all people upon the face of the earth, otherwise than indirectly.

“The great voice out of the temple in heaven from the throne,” appears to be the voice of the LORD JESUS, joined, it may be, with the voice of His saints who have been gathered to Him, and who, as a body, compose this temple ; as it is written, “Ye are the temple of the living God.” It is evidently not a material, but a spiritual temple which is here spoken of—a temple composed of glorified saints, even that temple which is “built upon the foundation of Apostles and Prophets, JESUS CHRIST Himself being the chief corner stone.” And the *voice* proceeding from the temple, at the pouring out of this seventh vial, declares “It is done,” even as we were told respecting the blast of the seventh angel, that when he should begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished. The door of mercy is closed for ever upon the apostates, and Satan is, as it were, permitted as a spirit to possess them, and to claim them for his own. Thus, the spirits of devils, which under the sixth vial went forth out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, have

2 Cor. vi. 16.

Eph. ii. 21,  
22.

Rev. x. 7.



now accomplished their mission in gathering the kings of the earth, and of the whole world to the battle of the great day of GOD ALMIGHTY.

“The voices and thunderings, and lightnings,” which accompany the outpouring of this vial, afford additional confirmation of the interpretation we have given of the temple; for they are emblematical of the manifestations of the powers of the HOLY GHOST in CHRIST’S glorified Church.

“And there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.” This earthquake will be of a character unparalleled in the page of history, because at this time, there is nothing on earth to restrain the powers of evil. In other words, the saints of GOD being taken out of the way, and gathered unto the LORD in heaven, there is nothing to let or hinder the revelation of Antichrist; who now doeth after his own will, even after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs and lying wonders, and consummates the mystery of iniquity. By this mighty earthquake, or convulsion among the baptized nations, Christendom is divided into three parts, or corporate bodies; answering in their character to the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, which may indeed be called the trinity of hell; having the spirit of Satan in them all; for though they are diverse from each other, they are united in opposing the LORD, and those who are with Him, who are now about to be manifested in glory, and to take vengeance on the workers of iniquity. Although the nations of Christendom have thus arranged themselves under these three leading spirits of evil, that they may combine together against the LORD and against His Anointed, they are not united

Vide 2 Thes.  
ii. 7, 10.

among themselves, neither indeed can be: for out of CHRIST no true unity can be seen. And these are they who have rejected the truth, or, holding it in unrighteousness, have been given up to believe a lie.

What this threefold division of Christendom may be, further than as men range themselves under these threefold spirits of devils, does not appear in this prophecy; and we cannot further speak of it, except in so far as we may perhaps obtain some additional light upon an event which is yet future, by looking upon the present state of Christendom, which, though not as yet given over to judgment to be possessed by these evil spirits, may be regarded as a shadow of the condition into which it will hereafter be brought when iniquity is come to the full. For "the falling away" from the primitive faith, of which S. Paul spake, having long since commenced, the apostacy will go on to its consummation, when the saints of God—"the remnant which shall return to the mighty God of Jacob," have been gathered out of it. The spirit of Antichrist wrought even in the Apostles' days, and the mystery of iniquity which then began to be developed in the schisms which sprung up in the Church, has since been manifested by the division of Christendom into three parts, Greek, Papal, and Protestant. And it seems probable that on the failure of those ministries, which were set in the Church at the beginning for the preservation of its unity, the baptized would naturally fall into a threefold division. For as there are three persons in the unity of God, so when that unity is lost sight of, the personalities only, and their distinct operations, which are in a certain measure demonstrable, would be thought of and practically acknowledged. We have before observed that the three divisions

2 Thess. ii. 3.

Vide 1sa. x.  
21.

of Christendom, have been arranged, as it were, under these three personalities of FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, which schismatic tendency, when consummated in wickedness, will cause apostate men to arrange themselves under the three spirits of evil which come out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, and will so far illustrate the judgment declared under this last vial of wrath which saith, "the great city was divided into three parts." Vide p. 132.

"And the cities of the nations fell : and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath." As Christendom is denominated "*the great city*," so the national churches are called "the cities of the nations." And great Babylon being brought into remembrance before God, shows that her sins have reached unto heaven, and that the time is come when she shall be judged. She is now made to drink of the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. "*In the fall of the cities of the nations*," we learn that all national churches shall be abolished : for it is the time when the beast shall do according to his will, and seek to appropriate to himself all formal worship. The Church having, through the rejection of the LORD's rule in those whom He appointed to rule, come into that condition of spiritual captivity symbolized by Babylon, (where God's ancient people were held in bondage for their iniquities,) and refusing the means of deliverance offered her of God, shall be utterly destroyed ; for Babylon shall fall to rise no more. "Wrath shall come upon her to the uttermost," and they who would not that the LORD should rule over them, shall be given into the hands of a cruel Lord, who shall

rule them with a rod of iron. It is by wicked instruments, or men of the earth, that the LORD will destroy the apostate church, even as He used the Assyrian of old, to execute His wrath upon those who had altogether forsaken Him, which indeed is prophetic of this judgment—"O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger, and the staff in their hand is My indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of My wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire in the streets."

"And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." The passing away of the islands and mountains, cannot of course mean the disappearing of the islands, or mountains of the earth in a literal sense, (such an interpretation being altogether inconsistent with the analogy of the whole prophecy,) but must be understood in a metaphorical way, to represent the merging of all principalities, and powers upon earth, into one great confederacy of evil; of which the personal Antichrist is the head; the *islands* being emblematical of republican, and the *mountains* of monarchical governments.

"And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great." Some have interpreted this hail to represent the northern nations—the Russian armies, or the Gog and Magog of the north, coming down upon western Europe or Christendom. But how these can be called hail, we are at a loss to understand, or how each man can be said to be the weight of a talent, is equally inexplicable. There is no authority throughout the

Scriptures for any such idea ; and it would violate all analogy of interpretation. Not that we deny that God may use the great colossal powers of the north to inflict judgment upon the Papal nations ; this is very probable ; and in this sense the hail may have a kind of secondary application ; but we entirely reject it as being the true interpretation of the symbol.

“The great hail out of heaven,” represents to us, that the saints of God who have been gathered to Him in the clouds of heaven, shall at the outpouring of this vial, be engaged in executing God’s righteous judgments on apostate Christendom, as it is written, “Such honour have all His saints.” If it be asked, Ps. cxlix. 9. how does the hail represent these judgments ? we answer, In many parts of Scripture, rain from heaven is used as an emblem of the descent of the HOLY GHOST upon man as a ministry of blessing ; and hail being congealed rain deprived of its principle of heat, shows that the Spirit of God which falls upon the righteous as rain, refreshing and strengthening them, falls upon the wicked in judgment to their destruction, “to the one, it is a savour of life unto life, and to the 2 Cor. ii. 16. other of death unto death.”

This view of the subject will also help us to understand why “*each stone*” is said to be “*about the weight of a talent*.” To explain this, we must refer to the mystery of the talent as used under the law in the symbols of ministry contained in the Holy Place, of all which S. Paul speaks as being a shadow of heavenly things ; that is, of those things belonging to the Church of CHRIST ; the candlestick which stood in the Holy Place of the Temple over against the table of shew-bread, was made of pure beaten gold, and its weight was that of a *talent*. And in this book of the

Vide Ex.  
xxv. 31 and  
39.

Rev. i. 20.

Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, the candlestick is explained to be the symbol of a church filled with the HOLY GHOST ; with its gifts of ministry, and its chief Minister or Angel presiding over it, giving forth the light of GOD'S truth, for the good of the flock. It should appear therefore, that as these judgments are ministered by Angels, they are of that class mentioned in the Epistles ; that is, they are the presiding ministers or heads of churches, by and under whom the saints have been gathered to the LORD, who personally represent the churches under their rule, and the weight of whose influence felt in these fearful judgments, appears to be referred to in each stone being the weight of a talent.

We may add also to this explanation, that each stone, being said in the prophecy, to be about the weight of a talent, appears to indicate, that such churches or bodies of Christian men as those to whom S. John was commissioned to write at the beginning of this book, would again be seen before the judgment contained in this last vial of wrath begins, and that the ministry of GOD'S Word and the gracious influence of His Holy Spirit being rejected, and quenched by men who receive not the love of the truth, the Spirit of GOD would be withdrawn from them, and the mercy which had been held out to them, would assume the form of judgment, in which wrath alone will be revealed.

We may also remark, that under the sixth period, or second woe trumpet, it is said, "they repented not ;" but here, in this *last* period, they "blaspheme GOD because of the hail ;" and as the former statement showed that the time of repentance was not then passed, the latter shows that at this time there is no

place found for repentance ; and their blasphemy against God is not done ignorantly, but knowingly, and that because of the hail ; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

Thus have we concluded our interpretation of this most perfect and comprehensive form of prophecy in its sevenfoldness, as given under its Spiritual, Civil, Ecclesiastical, and Judicial aspects or Phases.

The remaining chapters, which we now proceed to consider, will tend still further to illustrate and confirm the interpretation we have given.

## PART XIII.

THE CHRISTIAN APOSTACY. BABYLON DESCRIBED, AND FORE-  
DOOMED: EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THE FALL OF BABYLON.  
THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ANTICHRISTIAN ARMY.

Rev. xvii.

1 AND there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

5 And upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of JESUS: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

8 The beast that thou sawest was and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.



9 And here *is* the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

11 And the beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is LORD of lords and KING of kings: and they that are with Him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful.

15 And He saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His Will, and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

This and the two following chapters appear to be given as explanatory of certain notices and events, which in the sequence of the prophetic narrative we have passed over. The visions contained in these chapters could not have been given before without interrupting the series of prophecies. For they explain in detail those things concerning the beast and his judgment, and the destruction of the powers of evil which are notified to us in the sixth trumpet and vial. The first two of these chapters, namely, the seventeenth and eighteenth, give us a symbolic description of the condition in which the apostate Church will be found in con-

nexion with the infidel Antichrist, together with those who shall be destroyed with her. And the nineteenth chapter presents us with a description of the mode of their destruction.

We are first informed that the Apostle is visited by one of the seven angels which had the seven vials; who shows him the righteous judgments of God upon the apostate Church and nations. The fact here represented by the mission of the angel to interpret this mystery of iniquity and its judgment, contains in it a still further mystery of the condition and ministry of the Church of CHRIST, at the time when this prophecy shall be fulfilled, and that ordinance of the Church, represented by the Angel, shall again be seen. This is implied also in the interpretation of the prefatory visions to the seals, concerning the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders: for in the restoration of the Apostleship, and of the fourfold ministry of CHRIST at this time, is included the perfect order and constitution of the Church of CHRIST, in its sevenfoldness of angelic ministry, as revealed in the prefatory vision to the Epistles. It is one of these seven angels, that shows to S. John, the bride the Lamb's wife, and also the visions in chapters xix. and xxi.; which being prophetic of still further events, imply that all these ordinances will be revived, and in active exercise, at the time the Church is made ready, and prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

In chapters xix. 10, and xxii. 9, it is also said, that "the Apostle fell down before the feet of the angel which showed him these things, to worship him; and the angel said unto him, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book:

worship God." Admitting that at the time of our LORD's appearing to the Church, there will be an interval between the resurrection of "the dead in CHRIST," and the changing of the living saints, previously to our being caught up together to meet the LORD in the air; it is not improbable, that this circumstance recorded in the vision may be intended to reveal to us, the actual appearing of the risen saints to the Apostolic Church, gathered unto the LORD on earth; and the readiness of those who behold them to fall down at the feet of such to worship them.

"And the angel talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters; with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." There can be no doubt that the great whore here mentioned is the apostate church, headed up in Rome; because there is no other ecclesiastical polity, which answers to this description. The Church in the last days, instead of being manifested as a chaste virgin, espoused unto one husband, even CHRIST, has the appearance and character of a drunken harlot! "She sitteth upon many waters;" which are the peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues, by which she has been upheld and supported. Her unholy connexion with the kings of the earth, is here spiritually called fornication: for she has united herself with the kings of the earth, and sought the honour which cometh of men, and the rewards which temporal power bestows; instead of looking to the LORD alone for her endowments and honour; and consequently she has lowered the standard of holiness and purity, which she should

have required in her ministers, and of which she should have been the example. She has prostituted her spiritual power to temporal gain, selling herself to do evil ; and the earthly and heavenly things have been so mingled together, that gain and godliness are considered as synonymous. Under the profession of serving God, men have been only the servants of their own lusts, and thus the inhabitants of the earth have been made to drink of the wine of her fornication.

“ So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness : and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of the names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.” The Apostle being carried in the Spirit into the wilderness, reveals to us the time, when the events here symbolized have their manifestation : for we have had notice before of a wilderness condition of the Church in chapter xii. 14, where it is said that the woman fled into the wilderness after the birth of the manchild ; which we interpreted to represent the condition of the Church after the translation of the saints. This vision, therefore, of the scarlet coloured beast being seen in the wilderness, is an indication of the time when this mystery of iniquity shall be manifested ; or in other words, when the personal Antichrist shall have become the head of the Roman earth, and have gathered to himself the powers of all people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. For as the seven heads of the beast on which the harlot sitteth, are declared to be seven mountains, which in the figurative language of this book signifies a sevenfold form of kingdom-rule, so the ten horns represent its ten last kings, or rulers ; we say *last*, because it is the time of their last confederacy, when they shall be united together against the

LORD and His Anointed, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast—a power not exercised as yet ; and which will be seen only under the last form of evil, when they shall reign “one hour” with him. This designation of time shows it also to be the closing scene of antagonism between CHRIST and Antichrist ; and that it is in truth, the hour of his judgment ; which terminates in the beast and the false prophet being taken, and cast into the lake of fire burning with brimstone, and the slaying of the remnant with the sword of the LORD of Hosts. Rev. xix. 20, 21.

“And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.” The purple and scarlet colour wherewith she was clothed, denote her being possessed of royal and earthly power, and her being decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, shows that she has in her the precious endowments, which should have been used in the building up of the Church of God : for these are symbols employed to represent the precious things seen in the New Jerusalem, which descended from God out of heaven, which holy city is declared to be the Bride, the Lamb’s wife. Also the golden cup which she holds in her hand, denotes that she has the form of the truth in her communion ; but instead of its being filled with the blood of CHRIST, as her life, it has been filled with abominations and filthiness of her fornications ; instead of her fellowship being with CHRIST, it has been with kings, and her life has been that of the natural man, instead of the life of her risen LORD. Holding the truth of God in unrighteousness, her cup is not, as it ought to have been, the commu-

nion of the blood of CHRIST, and of His life, but that which is from beneath, earthly, sensual, devilish.

2 Thess. ii.  
7, 8.

“And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” In her, as representing the whole of Christendom, will be consummated that mystery of iniquity of which S. Paul spake in his Epistle to the Thessalonians, saying, “The mystery of iniquity doth already work, but only he who now letteth (or hindereth) will let until he (the elect body of CHRIST,) be taken out of the way, (removed by translation;) and then shall that wicked be revealed whom the LORD shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming.” There is then a mystery of iniquity as well as a mystery of godliness; both of which will be perfected at the end of the age. The one is the Church of CHRIST, in which GOD will be manifested; the other the body of Antichrist, in which Satan will be manifested. The Roman Church has been the mother of all abominations. Whilst she has regarded herself as the centre of unity, and of universal rule, she has been in Christendom the originator of all its heresies and schisms. She has given birth to the divisions, or bodies, which have separated from her; such as the Greek, the Lutheran, and the Anglican; which may well look up to her as the mother of all the evil that is manifested in their respective communions. As the true Church of CHRIST, on the one hand, has been the source of all the blessings of which mankind are partakers, through the redemption which is in CHRIST JESUS; so on the other hand, those who have corrupted themselves, and departed from the faith, have been the source of all the abominations that have

been committed by God's baptized people: in whom holiness and purity should have been seen, and in whom the life of CHRIST should have been manifested.

"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of JESUS. And when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration." If any other mark be needed to distinguish between the true and the false Church, we have it in the *murderous* character which is here given of it. As she has been the source of all the abominations which have been committed, so she has satiated herself with the blood of saints, by seeking to exterminate the true and faithful witnesses of JESUS. She is no less distinguished by her murders than by her fornications. Instead of sustaining and preserving the life of the servants of God, her delight has been to destroy them. She has indeed an indelible mark in this prophecy, which all nations, and all generations, might distinguish and recognize, as the character of one who is from beneath, and in alliance with him "who was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him."

The depth of this mystery of iniquity is again expressed in the sensation which this vision occasioned in the mind of the Apostle: for it is said, "he wondered with great admiration." Therefore the angel proceeded to interpret the vision, as we read in the following verses:

"And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest, was and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition; and they that

dwell upon the earth shall wonder, whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they shall behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And here is the mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the whore sitteth. And there are seven kings; five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come, and when he cometh he must continue a short space. And the beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." The seven heads of the beast are emblematical, as we have said, of a sevenfold form of kingdom rule, and are so interpreted by the angel. "The seven heads are seven mountains, upon which the woman sitteth." A *mountain*, in the symbolic language of Scripture, always designates a kingdom. David, speaking of the revolution of kingdoms in the last days, says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, therefore will we not fear . . . though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." Isaiah, speaking of the time when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our LORD, says, "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established upon the top of the mountains." And again, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in my holy mountain." Now it is remarkable, that the woman is said to sit upon seven mountains; for though the Roman earth is composed of ten kingdoms, three of them, Rome, Ravenna, and Lombardy, are the territorial possessions of the head of this apostate body, and thus seven (the number representing universal rule,) alone remain to acknowledge its outward supremacy: and however the Papal power may be at present disallowed and re-



sisted by certain divisions of Christendom, yet the head of Rome is the only person who claims a *universal* jurisdiction over all Christendom. The circumstance also of these heads being represented as kings, or heads of government, confirms the accuracy of this interpretation; for as the presence of a king supposes a kingdom, so we are doubly justified in thus explaining the symbol of the mountain. And it is still further evident, that these seven kings are also used symbolically to represent seven successive forms of ruling power; for the angel tells the Apostle that "five are fallen, one is, and the other is not yet come."

We have before shown what forms of government these heads represent. Five of them had passed away in S. John's time, the one then in existence was the imperial, and the next headship in Rome was that of the Pope. Of this head it is said, "he must continue a short space." This prophetic declaration appears inconsistent with the actual duration of this head, in comparison of the others: for the period of the Papal supremacy, instead of being short, has been *long*. In examining the passage, however, it will be evident that this inconsistency exists not in the prophecy itself, but in the translation. The word *δλίγον* does not in this place refer to duration of time, but to *the amount* of temporal power exercised by this head. The same word is so rendered in other places, where the word is used to signify *quantity*, and also *quality*, and *amount of force and power*. The circumstance of its being used in some places to denote a space of time, shows that the word must be rendered according to the sense of the passage in which it stands, and not in opposition to it; and in this point of view, if we would maintain consistency of interpretation, we must translate *δλίγον*

2 Cor. viii.  
15; 1 Tim.  
v. 23; Acts  
xii. 18; xv.  
2; xxvii. 20.

in the passage before us, as denoting the *amount* of temporal power exercised by the seventh head, and not the time or period of its duration. The word *ὀλίγον* therefore, does not mean that the seventh head should continue for a little space of time, but that his dominion or power, as a temporal prince, should be small compared with that of the others who preceded; and this has truly been the case. The dominion of the Pope as a *temporal* prince, has ever been small, extending only over the Papal States, and not over the ten kingdoms: for it was his spiritual power, or authority, as universal Bishop in the Church, that kings recognized and yielded to, when they bowed down before him. It was as possessing the keys of S. Peter, and not as wielding the sceptre of Rome, that they acknowledged his rule. The words, therefore, must be rendered, "When he cometh he must continue *small* or *little*." And this agrees with the prophecy of Daniel, where this power is called "a little horn," referring to his power as king. And it is in reference to his *temporal* power that the prophecy before us speaks of him as the seventh head; for all the other heads having been political, this must be regarded in the same light.

This view of the subject is also consistent with the interpretation given in the eighth verse, of the mystery of this beast, which hath the seven heads and ten horns: for he is there described as "*One that was, and is not, and yet is.*" This description of the Imperial power of the Roman earth, gives precisely its true history. "*It was,*" for it subsisted in its unity and power under the Cæsars; "*It is not,*" for though the Popes claimed supreme headship their authority has only been nominal, and is therefore truly described by

the negative designation, "and yet is:" for though this power was not realized by them, it will be fully developed under the last or eighth head, which is the Imperial head revived; and coming after the seventh may truly be called the *eighth*.

"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet: but receive power as kings one hour with the beast." These ten horns or kings, evidently refer to the last ten powers which shall unite with the beast, to put down all ecclesiastical rule and authority; despoiling the Church of its patrimony, and endowments; destroying its constitution, and persecuting those who are found witnessing to the truth of CHRIST. We have here another intimation of its being the last form of evil; for these kings are said to have received no kingdom as yet, but to receive power one hour with the beast; which is that hour or time of temptation, when Antichrist obtains the dominion; from which period of tribulation the sealed ones are "kept" or "escape," but through which the innumerable multitude pass. These ten kings give their power and strength unto the beast, acknowledging that the power they exercise is from beneath; and the beast thus constituted, carries the woman or harlot church whithersoever he listeth: and she is constrained to yield to his power. Thus is the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carrieth her fully revealed.

"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is LORD of lords, and KING of kings; and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful." It is the combined powers of the Roman earth, represented by the ten

kings, under the eighth head of the beast, which shall be found fighting against the LORD when He cometh, as described in the nineteenth chapter ; where S. John says, “ And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army.” And the Lamb shall overcome them—they shall be utterly consumed by the power of the LORD ; and it shall be seen that “ He is the only Potentate, the KING of kings and LORD of lords,” and that His chosen, and faithful followers, who shall accompany Him to the battle of that great day of God Almighty, are His translated saints, who come with Him out of heaven. This victory of the LORD over His combined enemies is referred to by Isaiah, when describing the Assyrian and all his glory, as extending his wings, and filling the breadth of Immanuel’s land, he says,

Vide 1 Tim.  
vi. 15.

Isa. viii. 9—  
16.

“ Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken to pieces ; and give ear, all ye of far countries, gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces ; gird yourselves and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together and it shall come to nought ; speak the word and it shall not stand : for God is with us.”

“ The many waters upon which the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire.” The kings of the earth receiving their power and strength from the people, and adopting their principles, will hate those forms of religion with which they have hitherto been united, and associated, and will proceed to spoil and destroy all ecclesiastical polity, and to appropriate the revenues of the Church to the use of

the State, and civil purposes. They will make her naked, divesting her of all authority ; and will consume her in the fire of their jealousy. And her ancient form of polity in which she has exercised temporal power in conjunction with ecclesiastical, being made to cease for ever, she will be obliged to assume the character of the false prophet, and to prophesy before the beast, advocating those very principles which wrought her destruction.

“ For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God be fulfilled.” “ God hath made the wicked for the day of wrath,” and He will use them as His instruments to punish the apostate, even as He did the Assyrian of old ; and when they have accomplished His purpose, they also will be destroyed.

*Vide Prov.  
xvi. 4.*

“ And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” The woman, and the great city, are used as emblems in this prophecy to denote Christendom, as headed up in Rome, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. This great city embraces all Christendom. And therefore when the nations of the Roman earth are judged, it is under the name of the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornications : as interpreted in the two following chapters, where her judgment is foretold ; the first of which we may entitle

#### BABYLON DESCRIBED AND FOREDOOMED.

1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power ; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

*Rev. xviii.*

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup she hath filled fill to her double.

7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine: and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God Who judgeth her.

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

12 The merchandise of gold and silver and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron and marble.

13 And cinnamon and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by

her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off.

18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What *city is* like unto this great city!

19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

20 Rejoice over her, *thou* heaven, and *ye* holy Apostles and Prophets: for God hath avenged you on her.

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast *it* into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman of whatsoever craft *he be*, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

The description given in this chapter of Babylon, and her destruction, follows in the order or sequence of the preceding chapter according to the announcement of the angel in the seventh verse, where it is said, "I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns." The mystery of the latter, the angel proceeded immediately to give, but reserved that of the

former until now ; by which arrangement, the sequence of events as contained in the fourteenth chapter is not interfered with, and the account of Babylon and her destruction, to be found in the eighth and two following verses of that chapter, serves as a prophetic link to connect it with the enlarged description of the great city and its fall given in the chapter before us. We may trace the same arrangement for preserving the order of the prophetic narrative in the mention of the beast in chapter xi. 7, while the full revelation of the mystery is reserved till a subsequent chapter.

The angel who appears to the Apostle in this vision, is the same mentioned in the eighth verse of the fourteenth chapter ; and the description of his mission of judgment, given in the eighteenth chapter is only a further development of this mystery of iniquity, in order that there might be no mistake as to the true meaning of the word *BABYLON* ; or to its identity in both passages.

S. John says, " And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power ; and the earth was lightened with his glory." This Angel is doubtless emblematical of an angelic ministry in the Church ; and his appearance at this time intimates that at the last period of the Church's history, when the full mystery of the iniquity of Babylon (upon which this judgment is to be visited) shall be revealed, such a ministry will be in operation. What is further stated concerning the angel, that he came down from heaven, having great power, the earth also being lightened with his glory, suggests to us, that he represents a ministry from the risen and translated saints, who are at this time with the LORD in the air. And whilst nothing short of this would answer to the



description here given, it throws further light upon the fourteenth chapter, and shows that the ministerial action there recorded must be assigned to the translated body.

The announcement of the fall of Babylon is given us in the same words as in the fourteenth chapter, "*Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen!*" Babylon contains the same mystery as the woman, the mother of harlots, for she is declared to be that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth. In other words, Babylon is apostate Christendom, the nominal head of which is Rome, all the evils denounced in the prophecy of this book, having arisen and proceeded from her. The first statement concerning the condition or character of Babylon here given, is that she is become "the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." This is the final doom of apostates, even of all who have departed from the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST: for having rejected Him as their ruler and guide, and grieved and quenched the HOLY GHOST so that He could not dwell in them, they come under the dominion of Satan, and are filled with devils, and inhabited by every foul spirit; thus resembling "a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Having refused to be crucified with CHRIST, and to enter into His life; and renouncing, as it were, the whole framework of Christian doctrine and discipline, the Church is at length left to her own way—to follow her own worldly interests and desires; and giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, she is filled with them, and stands forth in striking and awful contrast to the description given of the true Church of CHRIST, as pure and undefiled, and filled with the

Eph. ii. 29.      HOLY GHOST—"an habitation of God through the Spirit."

"For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." That for which she is here condemned, and which has led to the fearful condition in which she is at last found, is the spiritual fornication which she has committed in her unhalloved and unlawful union with the kings of the earth. Having united and sold herself to the powers that be, for reward, and for the worldly honour she has received from them, they have been, either directly or indirectly, acknowledged as her head, instead of Him who is exalted to be Head over all to His Church, and who is her Head and LORD, as well as her betrothed Husband. "The wine of the wrath of her fornication," of which all nations have drunk, symbolizes the unholy exercise of the civil power, which she has used to enforce her discipline, and by which she has persecuted the saints who would not submit to her dominion, or partake of her abominations. "The merchants of the earth, who have waxed rich through her delicacies," are those who have made gain of godliness, seeking preferment in the Church for the sake of its emoluments, and making merchandize of sacred things, as though they were the things of this world, in order to gratify the lusts of the flesh. And if the indignation of the LORD was awakened in the days of His humiliation, when He overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, driving them out of the temple with a scourge of small cords, how must His holy jealousy be provoked

at what He now beholds of the far greater iniquity, symbolized in this chapter; and how surely will He visit these things upon Babylon, when the time of judgment shall arrive! Preparatory to this visitation it is written,

“I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” At the time of this judgment upon Babylon, there will be found in her many who fear God, but whose eyes have not been opened to see her abominations until they are awakened by beholding that the hour of her judgment is come. For, as we have before remarked, the wheat and the tares grow together in the same ground until the time of harvest, and are not separated before. And we learn in this book that the harvest of the earth is not reaped till after the destruction of the city, and during a time of great trial and persecution to those who are not one in spirit with this mystery of iniquity. The word now spoken from heaven unto the saints is, “Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” There is no way of escape from her plagues at this time, but by separating from her Communion, not only in spirit, but in outward act. The *plagues*, which at this time come upon Babylon, we believe to be the antitypes of those which destroyed Egypt of old, and to which reference was made in the eleventh chapter, in which apostate Christendom is “*spiritually* called *Egypt*,” “where,” it is also said, “Our LORD was crucified.” And as Pharaoh and his host were destroyed in the Red sea, at the time when the children of Israel were delivered, so shall it be when Babylon is judged. Those who obey

Rev. xiv. 12  
—16.

the command of the LORD, and flee out of her, shall escape her plagues, and be under the immediate guidance and protection of the LORD and His saints. For as He dwelt in the pillar of cloud and of fire, when He brought Israel out of Egypt and destroyed their enemies, so will He at this time be with His risen and translated saints in the *air* or, as He is represented in the fourteenth chapter, (where He is described as reaping the harvest of the earth,) seated "upon a white cloud." Some commentators suppose that the plagues here mentioned are the seven vials of wrath, because *they* are called plagues. But we have already shown the erroneousness of this interpretation; and without referring to all that has been said on this subject, it may be sufficient to observe here, that as the LORD's Advent is announced in the sixth vial, five at least must have been poured out before He comes, which proves the fallacy of the idea that He does not come till after the destruction of Babylon, nay, as some say, until the destruction of Antichrist, which is utterly opposed to many of the plainest prophecies of this book. The plagues, therefore, here spoken of, which come upon Babylon at the time of her destruction, are the anti-type of those which destroyed Egypt, and not the vials of wrath. But this will appear still more evident as we proceed with the revelation given of her destruction. We do not deny, however, that the vials of wrath may have reference by way of *application* to these plagues, in the same way as the Epistles have a universal application, as well as a special fulfilment; because we have seen that the apostacy of Christendom has been one of progress and growth, and consequently those who have partaken of her sins in their day and generation have also received of her plagues. And histo-

rically, this voice has ever been addressed to the faithful in the Church, calling upon them to separate themselves from every false and delusive system, and to come out of Babylon, at least, in spirit, even as Daniel did who prayed for his people with his face toward Jerusalem, while a captive in Babylon of old, and whose prayers were answered in their restoration under Cyrus.

“For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.” Here again it is evident, that the time when she is visited with these plagues, is when she has filled up the measure of her sins. “Reward her, even as she hath rewarded you, and double unto her double, according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.” The saints being called upon to inflict this punishment, shows also that the time of the visitation is subsequent to their being gathered unto the LORD, as His first fruits. In the seventh verse it is said, that she had lived deliciously, and in the ninth, that the kings of the earth had lived deliciously with her. These words are expressive of her exaltation and power in the high places of the earth. As she has sought the things of this world, and the honour which cometh from its rulers, so have they used her for their own gratification, and to further their own objects. And she is to be rewarded according to her works, and the double portion of torment and sorrow to be given to her, shows how greatly she has misused and perverted the things of God, and lived contrary to the mind and Spirit of CHRIST. If she had continued one with Him, she would not have been of this world; nor have possessed herself of its rule and power; nor have sat as a queen; but would have waited for her LORD from

heaven, when she, as His true and faithful Bride, the pure and undefiled one, should reign with Him in His kingdom and glory. But inasmuch as she has become an adultress, and played the harlot with many lovers ; “ therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine ; and she shall be utterly burned with fire : for strong is the LORD GOD who judgeth her.” These troubles come upon her through her separation from the State ; for being left without protection, and deprived of all her resources, temporal as well as spiritual, she is destroyed by the fire of the jealousy of her enemies ; “ for strong is the LORD GOD who judgeth her.” As under the law an adultress was burned with fire, so the Church being an adultress, is destroyed by the fire of His indignation. She shall be utterly despoiled of all ecclesiastical and regal authority, and of all her outward splendour, riches and honour. Those who have hitherto been her friends shall now be turned against her, and be used as instruments for her destruction ; even as it is stated in the foregoing chapter, where the ten kings are said to hate the whore, and make her desolate, and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. Up to this time, the Christian religion will be nominally the religion of the State, supported and protected by it, even as in the time of Napoleon it was found necessary to use it for civil purposes, and to strengthen the hands of government by its influence and power over the consciences of men. But when the time spoken of in this prophecy shall arrive, and Babylon be judged, Christianity will be denounced even in name ; for the Antichrist shall set *himself* up as the only object of worship, and many who were only by profession priests of CHRIST, shall become priests of Antichrist, and minister at his

Rev. xvii.  
16.

altar : for he shall cause all, both small and great, rich and poor, to worship him.

“ And the kings of the earth who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her burning, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city ! for in one hour is thy judgment come.” So great will be the distress, and contempt poured upon her dignitaries, that kings will bewail and lament that so much earthly glory and magnificence should pass away. The indignation of the LORD will also strike terror into their hearts ; and being afraid to help or succour her, they will stand afar off for the fear of her torment, being themselves under the direction of a master-spirit, and therefore unable to follow any other will but his. There may appear to be some disagreement in the fact, that the kings are here said to bewail her, whilst in the seventeenth chapter they are spoken of as the instruments of her destruction. But when we consider that this destruction of Babylon is a complete overturning of all those religious institutions and creeds which have so long existed, and that they are now to be superseded by the worship of the beast and the false prophet, and that these kings are under the direction of this wicked confederacy, it is not inconsistent to suppose that they will bewail and lament the departure of so much power and magnificence as that in which they have shared during the time of Babylon’s prosperity.

We may observe also, that the judgment of Babylon is said to come in *one hour*, while her plagues come in *one day*. There is no doubt a reason for this distinction, and we may infer, that as an hour is a part of a

day, so the act of Babylon's destruction will not extend over the whole period represented by the term day, but will take up only that same proportion as there is between an hour and a day, just as the destruction of Egypt may be said to have taken place in one hour, when the destroying angel passed through the land, and smote all the first-born, whilst the visitation of  
 Ezek. xxx. 9. her plagues took up a much longer period, and is termed a day.

“And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her : for no man buyeth their merchandise any more : the merchandise of gold and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.” The “merchants of the earth,” represent those persons before mentioned, who have used the Church as a source of emolument and gain, and who have trafficked in all that she possessed and ruled over, of which we have here a symbolic enumeration, showing that they were the very things of CHRIST in which she dealt, and which she misused. “Gold,” represents truth ; “silver,” love ; “precious stones,” gifts ; “pearls,” righteous judges ; “fine linen,” righteousness of saints ; “purple,” regal dignity ; “silk,” glory ; “scarlet,” faith in the sacrifice of CHRIST ; “thyine, or sweet wood,” the good and natural qualities of men ; “vessels of ivory,” righteous administrators of the laws and discipline of the Church ; “all manner of vessels of most precious wood, and of brass,



and iron, and marble," men of various character in the Church who have been raised up for the personation of all that was good and valuable in it ; "cinnamon," rebuke ; "odours," intercessions ; "ointments," grace of ordination ; "frankincense," offerings in righteousness ; "wine and oil," the joy and unction of the Spirit ; "fine flour," true doctrine ; "wheat," the word of God ; "cattle and sheep," ministers and people ; "horses and chariots," ministries and churches ; "bodies," formalists ; "souls of men," men who have lived unto God. There are here enumerated twenty-eight different things, or four sevens, as though it were intended thereby to express that the Church has possessed all the various forms of truth, although she has not used them for God, but for her own aggrandisement : and having abused and perverted the good things of God, they are now removed from her for ever.

"And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all." The ecclesiastical and honorary distinctions, reputation, worldly power, and advancement, have entirely and for ever departed from her.

"The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls ! for in one hour is so great riches come to nought." The fear of her torment inducing those who have hitherto gained by her traffic to stand afar off, represents their abjuration of her faith and doctrines, on account of the judgments which now over-

take her, which deprive them of all hope of future gain ; therefore, whilst they forsake her, as they are now obliged to do, they weep and wail. The six emblematical substances here enumerated, “ the fine linen, purple, scarlet, gold, precious stones, and pearls,” represent the more excellent qualities with which the Church has been endowed. The first three are the same as those mentioned in the construction of the tabernacle as forming its coverings and vail inwrought with cherubim. The omission of the *blue*, would seem to show that the Church has ceased to be spiritual and heavenly-minded : possessing the *forms* of the Spirit only, without the spiritual element suited to them.

“ And every shipmaster, and all that company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city ?” A ship is the emblem of a particular church or worshipping body. A shipmaster therefore, is one who has the direction or rule of that body ; the “ company ” are its people ; “ the sailors ” are the officiating ministers ; “ and as many as trade by sea,” the lay rectors, patrons, proprietors, and all those who make a gain of her spiritual offices. All these different bodies or classes of persons, standing afar off, and ceasing to cleave to and uphold the outward constitution of the Church, show that she is utterly forsaken. And they all join with the kings in their lamentation when they see the smoke of her burning, saying, What is like unto this great city !

“ And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness ! for in one hour is she

made desolate !” The casting dust upon the head was symbolic of dishonour and contempt, and may here represent the reproach and dishonour, which the bodies here symbolized cast upon those who have been the supreme and chief rulers in the Church, attributing all the evil they now endure to their misrule.

We can scarcely fail to observe that there are three classes of persons or bodies of men here enumerated, who especially bewail the destruction of Babylon ; namely, the *kings* of the earth, the *merchants* of the earth, the *shipmasters* and those that are under them. The first say, “ In one hour is thy judgment come ;” the second, “ In one hour so great riches is come to nought ;” the third, “ In one hour is she made desolate.” Whilst these all testify as to the period of her visitation, there is also an appropriateness and distinctiveness in their language, expressive of their respective interest in her, and of the loss they have sustained through her destruction. But there is a people who are called upon to rejoice in her desolation.

“ Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy Apostles and Prophets, for God hath avenged you on her.” The emphatic expression, “ Thou heaven,” is descriptive of a spiritual body, the true Church of CHRIST : for it is the spiritual alone who can rejoice in the destruction of Babylon ; and as these are associated with the holy Apostles and Prophets, we believe that it is the translated saints, perfected through their instrumentality, who now rejoice in beholding God’s righteous judgments on that system of iniquity, which so long substituted and practically denied these ordinances of the LORD in His Church.

“ And a mighty Angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with

violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." The millstone is an emblem of the ordinances in the Church of CHRIST for preparing the fine wheaten flour, of the word of God, or heavenly food, for the household of faith; and this symbolic act of the angel in taking up the stone like a great millstone, and casting it into the sea, represents the casting down of all who occupy any office of ministry in the Church; so that they will be no more able to exercise any authority over, or any ministry to the people. That such is the judgment that awaits Christendom, is evident from the declaration of the angel, saying, "Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." The immediate connexion between the act of the mighty angel and the command to the *heavens*, and holy *Apostles* and *Prophets*, to rejoice, seems to imply that the judgment which comes on Babylon, in this "hour" of her visitation, will be under the direction of the translated church.

"And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee: and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride, shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived." We have here four classes of persons represented under the emblem of "harpers, musicians, pipers, and trumpeters," whose voice it is said shall be heard no more at all in this doomed city. There has always been a fourfold form of character

among those who have ministered in holy things in the Church, corresponding to the four forms of ministry which were given by our LORD on the day of Pentecost for the perfecting of the saints. But even the *voice* of those four classes of persons, resembling in character the LORD's own ministries, shall be heard no more for ever. "The craftsman of whatsoever craft he be,"—those who have been used in building up and constructing the church, shall be found no more in the mighty city; neither shall "the sound of a millstone," the teacher's voice, be heard any more in Babylon: "and the light of the lamp," the Spirit of the living God in the ministry of His servants, "shall shine no more at all in her;" and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride "shall be no more heard" in that city: for He shall have entirely withdrawn Himself from it, and the bride shall have been gathered unto Him in the heavens; neither shall the truth of the ministry of CHRIST and His Church, be ever taught therein: for its sound will have departed entirely from the mystic city. "For her merchants were the great men of the earth," and her most holy things have been sold as merchandise: "for by her sorceries were all nations deceived;" men being led to rest in outward systems and ordinances, instead of using them as means of leading them to God.

"And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." This apostate and delusive system has been the means of destroying the spirit of prophecy and of holiness in the Church; which twofold form of truth or witness-bearing has ever been resisted and condemned in Babylon; and those servants of the LORD in whom either has appeared, have been silenced and slain. Therefore

the blood, or life of prophets and of holy men, in whom has been manifested the Spirit of CHRIST, and the death of all who have suffered martyrdom during this dispensation, is charged upon Babylon. It has ever been found expedient and necessary to put down this twofold witness of CHRIST, because its existence would be incompatible with, and destructive of the very constitution of Babylon. It is utterly impossible that either can be received or acknowledged by her, as before the presence of the light of God, every false light must give way, and Babylon must abandon and abjure her fornications, and merchandise, and honour, and riches. This she will not do, but will continue the same murderous spirit, shedding the blood of prophets, and of saints, unto the end.

#### EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THE FALL OF BABYLON, AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ANTICHRISTIAN ARMY.

Rev. xix.

1 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the LORD our GOD:

2 For true and righteous *are* His judgments: for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand.

3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great.

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the LORD God omnipotent reigneth.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the

marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of JESUS: worship GOD: for the testimony of JESUS is the spirit of prophecy.

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns: and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself.

13 And He *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called the Word of God.

14 And the armies *which were* in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of ALMIGHTY GOD.

16 And He hath on *His* vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun: and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all *men*, both free and bond, both small and great.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them

that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

After the previous description of Babylon, and her destruction, we have revealed unto us in the beginning of this chapter, the rejoicing over her, of those, who are gathered to the LORD, saying, "Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the LORD our God: for true and righteous are His judgments." They acquiesce and rejoice in the visitation of her sins, which God hath brought upon her, and the judgment which He hath executed in destroying that system of iniquity which defiled and oppressed the earth, under a form of godliness. The cry of the souls beneath the altar, who had been slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus, has now been answered according to the promise made to them: for He hath avenged their blood on them that dwell on the earth. "And again they said, Alleluia; and her smoke rose up for ever and ever." Not only are these words expressive of her torment, and irremediable dissolution, but of the shame and everlasting contempt in which she will ever be held.

Rev. vi. 9,  
10.

"And the four and twenty elders, and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen, Alleluia." Bearing in mind the interpretation given of these, in unfolding the vision of the fourth and fifth chapters, where the elders and living creatures are represented as being in the throne, and round about the throne, we can scarcely fail to perceive that the worship they now



offer unto God, is expressive of the fulfilment of His purpose in the perfecting of His Church ; or in other words, that this symbolic imagery is intended to show that the elect of God are gathered to Him, and the mystical body of CHRIST completed.

“ And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him both small and great.” The voice proceeding from the throne, in the midst of which are the four living creatures, shows the relation which the glorified Church will bear to the LORD’s faithful servants on the earth, and how the translated saints will be used to minister to them. For they call upon all His servants, and all that fear God, both small and great, to praise Him, meaning, no doubt, all who have escaped the judgment of Babylon, having fled out of her, according to the Divine command.

“ And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia ; for the LORD GOD omnipotent reigneth.” This great multitude is evidently the same as that seen in the visions of the seventh chapter, and described as an innumerable multitude, gathered out of every nation, people, and kindred, and tongues, and as having come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. These, in the vision before us, respond to the worship of the glorified Church, and reply to the injunction from above, with one heart and mind. And they give glory to God, because His kingdom is come, saying, “ Alleluia : for the LORD GOD omnipotent reigneth.” The kingdom of our LORD, and of His CHRIST, is now to be revealed, and made manifest. The injunction to

praise God in the foregoing verses, comes from the same source, (the glorified body of CHRIST,) as the command to fear Him in the fourteenth chapter ; for the first fruits unto God and the Lamb, which stand with Him on Mount Zion, are the same company or elect number as "the much people in heaven," and the living creatures in the midst of the throne. And those in the earth, who are called upon from above to praise God, are the same people as are described in the aforementioned chapter, by the *harvest*. At this period, then, there are evidently two distinct bodies of Christians : the one glorified, having put on incorruption ; the other, not having yet attained thereunto, though they be gathered unto the LORD on the earth, as wheat is gathered at the harvest, and preserved for the Master's use.

The translation of Christians, or the changing of the bodies of the living saints at our LORD's appearing and kingdom, appears to us to be limited to those denominated "the first fruits," who are the body of CHRIST, the Bride, the Lamb's wife. Although this view of the subject may be counter to the general opinion, we will content ourselves for the present, by giving a few reasons for our belief ; having no doubt that sufficient evidence will be adduced to justify our interpretation, before we arrive at the end of the Revelation. First, we are taught in the Holy Scriptures, that the mystical body of CHRIST will be completed at His appearing, and that those who shall compose that body are "*the dead in CHRIST*," and those who shall be *changed* at that time and caught up together with them to meet the LORD in the air ; which latter are also spoken of under the emblem of "*the wise virgins*," and "*the first fruits*." Secondly, it is not said of the

foolish virgins, or of those signified by the harvest, that they attain unto the resurrection glory at this time ; which is at least a strong presumptive evidence that they do not. Thirdly, if the gathering of the harvest implied translation, and the passing of the saints into the kingdom in glorified bodies, there would be little or no distinction between those who reign with CHRIST and those who are subject to that reign. Again, concerning these two companies, the first is described in symbolic language, as being in and about the throne : the latter, as standing round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four living creatures. In the fourteenth chapter also, the one is described as standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, and the other only as subsequently gathered. And in the chapter we are considering, the one is spoken of as being in heaven, and the other on the earth. The gathering of the harvest at the end of the age, is also spoken of by our LORD, not as an act of translation, but of separation. It should also be remembered, that the first resurrection from among the dead, and the change of those among the living, who shall be accounted worthy to be made like unto our LORD's glorious body at His appearing, are reserved only for those who are pre-eminently the saints of God, and have earned unto themselves this distinction. If it were not so, wherefore that earnest desire to attain it? Surely the attainments of S. Paul, when he wrote his Epistle to the Philippians, exceeded those of most Christians in our day ; yet he earnestly desired to "know the fellowship of CHRIST's sufferings, and to be made conformable unto His death," saying, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from out of the dead ; not as though I had already attained, either

were already perfect : but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of CHRIST JESUS." Now that such an eminent servant of GOD should thus speak of himself, gives a very high standard for the character of those who shall partake of the resurrection from the dead ; that is, of the first resurrection ; and those only who attain that resurrection will be fitted to reign with CHRIST at His appearing. Our LORD Himself obtained not the end of man's creation, until He rose from the dead ; not until then did He say unto His disciples, " All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth." And not until He ascended into heaven, was it known to the whole house of Israel, that the same JESUS, whom they had crucified, was made both LORD and CHRIST. Even so, it is only by *resurrection*, or translation, that we shall be able to *reign* with Him in His kingdom.

" Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." Those who utter these words, are " the great multitude, who shout Alleluia, because the LORD GOD omnipotent reigneth." And the language they use in this verse, marks them as a distinct body of people from the translated Church, or people in heaven, who are here called by them " the Lamb's wife ;" and they rejoice, because the marriage is come, and because she hath made herself ready. They are evidently a body distinct from the bride, who though they are not of the bride, are called to be present at the marriage ; and in this their happiness will consist : they will be *in* the kingdom, and associated with the glorified Church, although they will not *reign* with CHRIST.

" And to her was granted that she should be arrayed

in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." In these words is described the meetness of the bride for the Bridegroom, and for her reigning with Him in His kingdom; the "fine linen clean and *bright*," (as it is in the margin,) is emblematical of the glory of the resurrection body, and was so used by our LORD in His transfiguration on the mount, when His raiment became bright and glistening, and whiter than any fuller on earth could white them. And the glorious resurrection body, with which the saints shall be clothed, will be the outward and visible manifestation of the righteousness of CHRIST, unto which they have attained, and being made like unto Him in the power and glory of His resurrection they will be fitted to reign with Him.

Vide S. Mark  
ix. 8; S.  
Luke ix. 29.

"And he said unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." Those who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb, are again distinguished from the bride. She has the highest glory in the kingdom of the LORD, but they also shall be truly blessed, who shall be accounted worthy to be present at the marriage. The expression of the angel seems to imply, that a shadow of doubt or hesitation had passed over the mind of the Apostle in beholding the distinction here made between the two companies, or that this glorious consummation was too great for the human mind to receive.

"And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not; I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of JESUS; worship GOD: for the testimony of JESUS is the spirit of prophecy." This act of the Apostle

seems to imply his high sense of the revelation he had received from the heavenly messenger who had showed him these things, and also foreshows there will be a similar tendency in those, who still remain in mortal bodies, to worship their brethren, who shall be exalted to such distinction, as to reign with CHRIST. For we know it has ever been the tendency of man, to fall down before those in power, and who have the power to bless. And it shows especially, that no act of worship should be ever given to any creature, however exalted, for this is an honour which belongeth unto God alone, who only is worthy to be worshipped.

“And I saw heaven opened, and beheld a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war.” The visions described in the remaining portion of this chapter, reveal the last acts of the LORD previous to the binding of Satan, and the millennial reign of CHRIST and His saints upon the earth. The LORD JESUS is here represented as coming out of heaven to destroy His enemies, and to take possession of the redeemed earth. The attributes which are ascribed to Him, are those of righteousness, power, and authority. The horse being *white* on which He appears, is emblematical of His kingdom, as being established in righteousness; and His riding on the horse represents Him as its rightful King and Ruler, and as the LORD of Hosts, the LORD mighty in battle. He is called “Faithful and True,” to denote that He is the faithful One, who keepeth covenant for ever,—faithful to all His promises, and true to all His word. These glorious perfections of the LORD JESUS, being the same as He assumes to Himself in the last Epistle, denote also, that the fulfilment of this vision is syn-

chronical with, or during the seventh and last period of the age ; and that He then comes to fulfil all His promises to His saints, and to help all the meek upon earth. " And in righteousness He doth judge and make war." Isaiah speaking of the same period says, Isa. xl. 8, 9. " With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins." The terrible judgment which He now executeth is in perfect righteousness ; for His enemies have exhausted every act of grace and mercy towards them, having chosen evil rather than good, and the service of Satan rather than the service of God.

" His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns ; and He had a name written, that no man knew but He Himself." His eyes resembling a flame of fire, represents that it is the jealousy of His love towards His chosen, that brings Him ; and that He comes to purify the earth, and to destroy all things that offend. The " many crowns on His head," show that all power on earth, which its rulers have abused, has reverted to Him ; and that He is come to possess Himself of it, and to show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and LORD of lords. The " name written that no man knew but He Himself," contains the mystery of His Godhead, as the Word ; a mystery which no creature in heaven or earth can participate in, or fully understand. He alone, who is God, can understand what the word which is God is, or the mystery of the eternal SON, as Man.

" And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood : and His name is called the Word of God." The emblem of the vesture dipped in blood, exhibits

Him as the Redeemer of mankind ; and shows that the day of eternal redemption has arrived, when He will beautify the meek with salvation, and avenge the blood of His saints upon their enemies. “ And His name is called the Word of God.” This appears to be the same referred to in the preceding verse—“ the name written which no man knew but He Himself :”

S. John i. i.

“ The Word which was in the beginning with God, and which was God :” The eternal SON, who came from the bosom of the FATHER to reveal Him, and was made Man. This Name involves that “ great mystery of Godliness,”—God manifest in the flesh—which though it passeth all understanding, is most surely believed, and rejoiced in by us.

1 Tim. iii.  
16.

“ And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.” These are His risen and translated saints, who are gathered to Him in the air—those mentioned in the fourteenth chapter, who stand with Him on Mount Zion, having His FATHER’S Name written in their foreheads. They are also on “ white horses,” because they are heads of corporate bodies, under the LORD of Hosts : each one being a king and a ruler. The “ raiment clean and bright,” with which they are clothed, is emblematical of the glory of the resurrection, unto which they have attained ; their vile bodies being changed, and made like unto CHRIST’S glorious body.

“ And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations : and He shall rule them with a rod of iron ; and He treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of ALMIGHTY GOD.” The sword proceeding out of His mouth, shows that it is not by an actual warfare of fleshly



arms, that His enemies at this time will be destroyed, but by His Word ; as it is written by Isaiah, “ He <sup>Isa. xi. 4.</sup> shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked ;” or as S. Paul hath it, “ Then shall that wicked be <sup>2Thess. ii. 8.</sup> revealed, whom the LORD shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming.” The “ rod of iron ” is a symbol of the flesh, and shows that it is after the rule of the flesh that the nations shall be judged ; that is, with judgment without mercy, which is the lot of those who have showed no mercy ; as it is written also in the second Psalm, “ Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” The “ treading of the wine-press ” is a further development of this great day of wrath, and righteous judgment of ALMIGHTY GOD. Isaiah, speaking of that day, uses the same emblem—“ Who <sup>Isa. lxiii. 1—</sup> is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah ? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength ? I, that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art Thou red in thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat ? I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there were none with Me ; for I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury ; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment. For the day of vengeance is in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come.” The treading of the wine-press, described by S. John in the vision before us, is the same emblem as is used in chapter xiv. ; and serves as a note of synchronism, to show that it relates to the same act of judgment ; and when

viewed in connexion with the judgment on Babylon, previously narrated in that chapter, proves incontrovertibly, that the interpretation we have given of the events therein revealed, must be the true one.

“And He hath on His vesture, and on His thigh, a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” His name of universal sovereignty and dominion is written upon His vesture, dipped in blood, to signify that it is through His obedience unto death, even the death of the Cross, that He hath destroyed him that had the power of death, and received a name which is above every name, that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD to the glory of God the FATHER.” And this name which He hath obtained through that all perfect sacrifice of Himself, which He, through the eternal Spirit offered unto God, is written upon “His thigh,” to denote that it is as *man* He exerciseth this power; as it is written, “The FATHER hath committed all judgment unto the SON, because He is the Son of Man;” and again, “He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.” So David also speaks, “Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Most Mighty, with Thy glory and Thy Majesty. And in Thy Majesty ride prosperously because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and Thy right hand shall teach Thee terrible things.”

“And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly

Vide Phil. ii.  
6—11.

Vide S. John  
v. 22 and 27.

Acts xvii. 31.

Psa. xlv. 3, 4.

in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God: that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great." "The sun," in its primary signification, as an emblem, represents the LORD JESUS CHRIST as the Sun of Righteousness: and the angel standing in the sun, is also descriptive of Him as the angel of the everlasting covenant. This compound emblem shows that His Advent will reveal Him in His own peculiar glory as the Sun of Righteousness, and as the Head, or Universal Angel of His Church. "And He cried with a loud voice." The last voice that is heard, is the voice of the LORD JESUS Himself. And He calleth to "all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven." These, we know, from our LORD's own interpretation, are evil spirits. This call, therefore, to the powers of darkness to come and possess themselves, as it were, of His enemies, is the judicial act of giving them over to perdition. Such will be the last sad and irremediable state of those who have quenched and rejected the SPIRIT of GOD, and abjured the Name of CHRIST, given them in their baptism. That to which these evil spirits are invited, is called "the Supper of the great God," because it is the last act of judgment, and the consigning of these His enemies over to the blackness of darkness for ever.

The enumeration of the different orders, namely, of "kings and captains, and mighty men, and horses, and those that sit on them, and of men, both free and bond, both small and great," shows the universality of this last confederacy, and that the classes and con-

ditions of men, comprehended in it, are manifold. These are led on by the beast and his kings.

“And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These were both cast alive into the lake of fire, burning with brimstone. “And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.” These kings are *not* the same as are mentioned in the preceding verse, but distinct from them; and being associated with the beast and the false prophet, we have no doubt, that though their number is not specified, they are the *ten* kings mentioned in chapter xvii., who give their power and strength unto the beast, and make war with the Lamb, and who are overcome by Him: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and they that are with Him, are called, and chosen, and faithful. The beast and his ten kings are distinguished from their armies, which are led on by them: for upon the latter, the evil spirits are invoked to feed, and to possess themselves of their flesh; that is, of their bodies; whilst the judgment upon the beast and the false prophet is, that they are taken and cast alive into the lake of fire. The reason of this distinction appears to be, that the *head* of the last confederacy, and those immediately under him, including the false prophet, will be persons who having been pre-eminently wicked, are raised at this time in order to receive a pre-eminence in punish-

Verses 12—  
14.

ment and condemnation ; even as after the same analogy, those saints who have excelled in virtue, and been pre-eminently holy, shall be raised and made partakers of the first resurrection, and attain a higher degree of glory than the generality of Christians. Our reasons for thinking thus are these. First, it would appear from Daniel xii., that two classes of persons are spoken of as being raised at this time ; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt ; and this takes place when " His people are delivered." Therefore this must be the first resurrection, and not the general resurrection after the millennium. Secondly, the beast ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, and goeth into perdition. " The bottomless pit, (*ἄβυσσος*;) in other portions of Scripture is used to denote the place of the departed, and the abode of evil spirits. The only two places in the New Testament where the term is used, except in the Revelation, are S. Luke viii. 31, and Rom. x. 7 ; the one is spoken of as the abode of evil spirits, and the other as Hades, into which our LORD descended. It is spoken of also, as the place where Satan is to be confined during the thousand years. It seems impossible, therefore, to explain this term as referring to infidel principles, as some interpreters do, because it would be absurd to suppose the devils besought our LORD not to send them into an infidel state. Nor was CHRIST raised from infidel principles, or a state of infidelity, but from Hades ; neither would it be any punishment to confine Satan a thousand years in such a condition ; nor is it very consistent with reason to assert, as those must do who identify the locusts with Mahometanism, that the bottomless pit means Arabia, and the locusts Arabian horsemen ; yet such incon-

Vide Dan.  
xii. 1, 2.

Vide Rev.  
xx. 1-3.

sistencies are the natural result of an interpretation, which does not take the Scripture for its guide.

Moreover, analogy would seem to demand in this last conflict for the possession of the earth, that there should be some similarity between the condition of the contending armies. If our Lord is to come out of heaven with His risen and translated saints, it is natural to suppose that the leaders, at least of those who oppose Him, will be risen men also; for we can scarcely conceive that any in mortal flesh should put themselves in array against such an army. But if this confederacy is led on by devil-possessed men, raised from the dead, and alive to their own eternal condition, it is easy to believe there is no desperate act within the compass of possibility which they would not attempt, in order, if possible, to keep possession of the earth of which they fear to be for ever dispossessed.

The beast and the false prophet are also said to be cast alive into the lake of fire; which being called "the second death," seems to imply that some of these persons at least have passed through the *first*, otherwise this casting into the lake of fire could not be called with any propriety, the *second*.

Finally, the remnant slain with the sword, and on whose flesh the fowls of the air (evil spirits) feed, are those enumerated in the eighteenth verse, who are subject to, and led on to the final conflict by this power from beneath, namely, the beast and the false prophet; to whom also, as we have before seen, the ten kings associated with them give their strength.

Compare  
verses 19,  
20, with xvii.  
11-14.

## PART XIV.

THE BINDING OF SATAN. THE FIRST RESURRECTION. THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM. THE LOOSING OF SATAN. THE DECEIVER AND THE DECEIVED DESTROYED. THE LAST JUDGMENT.

1 AND I saw an Angel come down from heaven, having the key <sup>Rev. xx.</sup> of the bottomless pit and a great chain in His hand.

2 And He laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled : and after that he must be loosed a little season.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them : and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of JESUS, and for the word of GOD, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands ; and they lived and reigned with CHRIST a thousand years.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of GOD and of CHRIST, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle : the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city : and fire came down from GOD out of heaven, and devoured them.

10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works,

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

This chapter opens with a revelation of the bringing in of the kingdom of JESUS CHRIST, as the next event subsequent to the destruction of the enemies of the LORD, described in the foregoing prophecy. In order to establish that dispensation of glory, and to secure the peace which characterises it, when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, it is necessary that the great troubler of the peace of men should have his power suspended, if not entirely destroyed. The vision, therefore, commences with the revelation of a mighty Angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand, in order to bind Satan, and shut him up in his prison house. The mighty Angel which cometh down from heaven, can be none other than the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Angel of the everlasting covenant, the great Head of the Church, and REDEEMER of mankind. He alone hath the key of the bottomless pit. It belongs to Him of



right. It was foretold of Him, by prophets of old, that He should descend into the abyss and rise again <sup>Rom. x. 6—9.</sup> from the dead as a mighty conqueror, possessing Himself of all power in heaven and earth. “He descended into Hades and rose again the third day from the dead.” For “the gates of hell could not prevail against Him.” He wrested the keys of death and of Hades from the hands of him that held them, even as He Himself declares in the first chapter of the prophecy of this book : saying, “I am He that liveth and <sup>Rev. i. 8.</sup> was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen ; and have the keys of hell and of death.” It is therefore, either by Himself, or by some ordinance of rule and authority in His Church, that the act here revealed of binding the great enemy of God and man, is effected. The *chain* also here spoken of, must represent some *spiritual* power in men, because the enemy whom the angel comes to bind, being a Spirit, can only be bound by those who have power over the spiritual. And further, its being held by an Angel, implies that the instrumentality must be that of a ruling class, in which point of view, the great chain aptly represents the combined and united powers of those angels <sup>Rev. i.</sup> who are ruling ministers of CHRIST, in their respective churches.

“And He laid hold upon the Dragon, that Old Serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.” This chief of the evil spirits, who is here bound, is designated by four names, as if to embrace therein every evil form of manifestation. And we do not remember that any other name is given to him in the Scriptures than these four, as a designating or appellative title. He is called the Dragon ; because he is the spiritual oppressor of mankind, and the

instigator of every unjust, unrighteous, and cruel act. He is called "the Old Serpent;" because he was a liar from the beginning, and under every dispensation has deceived mankind by his lying subtilty, obscuring and perverting the truth of God, and blinding "the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of CHRIST, Who is the image of God, should shine unto them." He is called "the Devil;" because he is the accuser both of God and man, bearing false witness of God, and representing Him as a hard Master instead of a loving FATHER, and thus holding men in the defilement of an evil conscience, by hiding from them the source of true peace, as manifested in the SON of God, who gave Himself a sacrifice for their sins: by the sprinkling of whose blood alone their conscience can be cleansed from dead works to serve the living God. He is called "Satan" or the adversary; because he is the opposer of all goodness, of all sacrifice, and all suffering for righteousness' sake; and therefore our LORD designated Peter as Satan, when that disciple through fleshly love, and consideration for his Master, would not that He should suffer in His testimony for the truth, or yield His life a sacrifice for sin. These four names which are here given to the chief of evil spirits, are intended, we believe, to remind us of those forms of wickedness and iniquity which have been manifested and wrought in the Church in opposition to, and contravention of God's pure and holy work through the ministries of CHRIST for man's perfection. So that in the binding of the evil Spirit here designated by these four names, we have a clear indication that these evil principles will cease to operate upon men, when this act of binding is accomplished.

The thousand years, during which period he is to be

bound, we are to understand literally: for otherwise, it would not be in analogy with the duration of the world's history, or the dispensations or ages, which precede the establishment of CHRIST's kingdom upon the earth: which we infer from the Scriptures, will not commence till six thousand years have run their course, answering to the six days of creation; the seventh thousand years being the antitype of the seventh day or Sabbath, the day on which God rested; and which He sanctified, and hallowed for man's sake; to be observed and enjoyed by him in all generations, and especially by us, seeing that the LORD JESUS distinguished it by His Resurrection, as the first fruits of them that slept; and after His Ascension, by sending the HOLY GHOST the Comforter unto His Church; which holy Sabbath or day of rest, is to be regarded as a pledge and earnest of the millennial rest which remaineth unto the people of God, with Whom one day is as a thousand years.

Ps. xc. 4.  
2 S. Peter iii.  
8.

“And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.” The bottomless pit or abyss into which Satan is cast, is the place where departed spirits go, who are not united to the LORD, or anointed with the Spirit of CHRIST. The shutting up of the devil in that abode, indicates that this prison-house, shall not be opened, during the thousand years. The “*seal*” that is set upon him, that is, upon his prison-house, is the symbol of the authority which holds him there, as a prisoner, during the millennial reign of CHRIST and His Saints upon the earth; and affords an additional proof, that his prison-house must remain

Rev. iii. 7.

closed, till opened by the same hand which shut him up: even by HIM, "Who shutteth and no man openeth, and openeth and no man shutteth." If no man dared to break the seal which the king of Babylon set upon the den of lions, into which Daniel was cast; or the seal set upon the Sepulchre of our LORD, by the authority of Pilate the Roman Governor; much less can any reverse the decree of the LORD, or oppose the authority which sealeth Satan up in his prison-house. The purpose of this act is, that the nations shall not be deceived any more; so that men shall no longer have the excuse of being ignorant of the Will of God, or of being tempted of Satan. We have also in this verse an announcement of the loosing again of Satan, at the end of the millennial reign.

S. Matt. xix.  
28.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of JESUS, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with CHRIST a thousand years." This being the age in which the saints reign with CHRIST, the thrones spoken of are in analogy with, and symbolic of, the power which the saints exercise with Him in His kingdom. The thrones here mentioned, doubtless belong to those only, to whom judgment is exclusively committed. Our LORD said to the Apostles at the beginning, that as they had forsaken all to follow Him, in the regeneration when the Son of Man should sit upon the throne of His glory, they also should sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. In the fourth chapter of this book, "four and twenty thrones are mentioned as sur-

rounding the throne of CHRIST; from which it appears, there are other thrones of judgment besides those promised to the first Apostles. The LORD also has promised to all the saints who overcome, that they shall sit with Him upon His throne: so the four and twenty elders may be regarded as representing those who reign with CHRIST. And "the four living creatures," who are symbolic of the Church in its fourfold character, are also said to be in and about the throne. In what way this function of reigning with CHRIST will be exercised is not here declared, or whether the rule of the saints will extend beyond the limits of this earth. There are however, certain passages in the Scriptures, which lead us to infer, that this rule will not be confined to the earth merely; because it is said that those who shall reign with the LORD, are "heirs of God and joint heirs with CHRIST." Now the rule of CHRIST is not limited to the earth: for as ALL things were created *by* Him and *for* Him, so is it also declared that all power in heaven and earth is committed unto Him, and that He is Head over all things unto His Church, which is His body, by and through which He filleth all things. This great truth is illustrated by the covenant made with Abraham, which covenant is said by S. Paul to be confirmed of GOD in CHRIST, wherein GOD promised that "his seed should be as the stars in heaven for multitude." This must mean the spiritual seed; for as the "seed is CHRIST," so the multitude referred to must be those who are CHRIST's; that is, the members of His mystical body. And that this is not an innumerable multitude is evident: for we are told that "God numbereth the stars, and calleth them all by their names;" and that He also "bringeth out their host by number." The LORD JESUS also identi-

Rom. viii.  
17.

S. John i.  
Rev. iv. 11.

S. Matt.  
xxviii. 18.  
Eph. i. 22,  
23.

Vide Gen.  
xxii. 17.

Vide Gal. iii.  
17.

Vide Gal. iii.  
16.

Ps. cxlvii. 4.

Isa. xl. 26.

fies the spiritual seed as members of His body ; saying,  
 Ps. cxxxix. 16. “ In Thy book were all my members written which in  
 continuance were fashioned when as yet there were  
 none of them.” S. Paul also likens the spiritual,  
 that is, those that are CHRIST’s in His glory, to the  
 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. stars in the heavens ; saying, “ As one star differeth  
 from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection  
 Dan. xii. 3. of the dead.” And “ they that turn many to righte-  
 ousness ” are said to “ shine as the stars for ever and  
 ever.” This continual allusion, therefore, to the  
 righteous shining as the stars in the kingdom of God,  
 and their number being as the number of the stars,—  
 Gen. xv. 5. “ so shall thy seed be,”—would lead us to infer, that  
 the planets and stars of heaven are among the “ *all*  
 Rev. xxi. 7. *things* ” that the saints shall inherit. We say it is not  
 an improbable hypothesis, that the elect of God shall  
 be used as kings and priests throughout the universe,  
 in the midst of God’s rational and spiritual creatures,  
 although their metropolitan city and habitation may  
 be upon this planet, which God has so highly favoured  
 and honoured as to make it the theatre, not only of  
 man’s redemption, but of the redemption of “ *all*  
*things*.” For our LORD taking the nature of man  
 who was formed of the dust of the earth, into union  
 with Himself, that as “ the Second Adam and LORD  
 from heaven,” He might obtain dominion, and bring  
 all things in subjection under Him, strengthens our  
 belief, that when the work of redemption shall be  
 completed by the resurrection from the dead, *here*,  
 even on *this earth* where JESUS shed His blood, and  
 became obedient unto death, even the death of the  
 cross, shall be the manifestation of that *Headship* of  
 CHRIST, and *Universal* dominion which He hath ob-  
 tained for Himself and His Saints, who shall attain

unto the resurrection *from* the dead ; that is, unto “ the first resurrection.” To this dominion, and rule of CHRIST and His Saints, reference appears to be made in the eighth Psalm, where it is written, “ O LORD our Governor, how excellent is Thy Name in all the earth : Thou madest Him to have dominion over all the works of Thy hands. Thou hast put all things under His feet.” For S. Paul quotes this Scripture to show that the universe in the age to come, will not be placed under the rule of angels, but under the dominion of glorified *men* ; adding, “ Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet. For in that He put all things in subjection under Him, He left nothing that was not put under Him. But now we see not yet all things put under Him. But we see JESUS, Who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour ”—thus identifying *man*, both in his humiliation and exaltation, with HIM Who was made man for our salvation, and showing that the glory and honour with which JESUS was crowned at His Ascension was a necessary and preparatory step to this subjection of all things to the rule of CHRIST and His Saints, and a pledge and earnest of the same. And further, in the following chapters, having described the Christian Priesthood as that which is after the order of Melchisedec, who was both king and priest, he says, “ Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear : for our God is a consuming fire.”

Heb. ii. 5—10.

Heb. xii. 28, 29.

Those who reign with CHRIST a thousand years are spoken of as the souls of them who were beheaded for the witness of JESUS, and for the Word of God. Some have supposed because the word “ *souls* ” is here

Gen. ii. 7.

used, and not *men*, that a literal resurrection is not intended. The absurdity of such an objection, however, is evident, when we consider that this is the generic term by which man was designated at the first, when he came out of the hands of his Maker : for he was then called "a living soul." And the same term was subsequently used to designate man's entire being. Of Abraham it is said, he took all "the *souls* (i.e. persons) they had begotten in Haran." "Esau took all the *souls* of his house." "All the *souls* of the house of Jacob were threescore and ten." "There were added to the Church three thousand *souls*." "We were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen *souls*." In these and many other places in Scripture the term *soul* is employed to designate not a part, but the whole nature or being of man, and in like manner in the vision before us, the word "souls" is used to describe those persons who had suffered martyrdom for the witness of Jesus, and the Word of God. This affords another instance of the beautiful harmony and analogy of God's Word, that the same term should be used to designate man in the day of redemption, as was used in the day of his creation.

It is remarkable that only one form of martyrdom is here mentioned, namely, that of *beheading*. This surely cannot mean that only those who have been literally beheaded will be of this number, as scarcely one in a thousand, perhaps, has suffered death under this form. The term here adopted would seem to imply therefore, that the spiritual reality of martyrdom consisted in the denial and renunciation of CHRIST'S *Headship* by those in power, which practically deprived the saints of the means of manifesting the same, and receiving the blessings which He would convey to them thereby.



This is worthy of particular attention, as touching a principle wherein is involved the true cause of all martyrdom, namely, “*The holding of the Head, even CHRIST,*” and refusing to obey any other Lord, save JESUS, truly and faithfully acknowledging Him in His ministers and ordinances ; for martyrdom has always been the consequence of a refusal on the part of the faithful to obey the illegitimate authority of self-constituted headship, which would deprive them of the privilege of being directed by CHRIST in reference to the duties belonging to their place and position upon earth at the time of their martyrdom. Nevertheless, although the malice of Satan is allowed to triumph for a season, yet it is only for a season that he triumphs : for by the resurrection of these saints from the dead, and their being made partakers of a life over which death has no power, they are reinstated in a position immutable and glorious, under the immediate guidance of the LORD ; and they are also privileged to reign with Him in His kingdom as a reward of their faithfulness in the hour of temptation ; thus verifying the truth of His Word, “ He that loseth his life for My sake, shall keep it unto life eternal.” We would, therefore, repeat, that this all-important principle of the Headship of CHRIST over His saints must be here alluded to, in the form of death specified, and that it must not be regarded as implying a literal thing. As, moreover, the spirit, rather than the letter, is herein implied, it follows in course, that this reigning with CHRIST cannot be confined exclusively to those who have actually suffered death. Indeed, no faithful reflecting mind, could come to such a conclusion ; for in that case our hope would be in martyrdom, rather than in the coming of the LORD ; and if none may

Col. ii. 19 ;  
Eph. iv. 15.

S. Matt. x.  
39, and S.  
John xii. 26.

reign with Him but those who have literally sealed their testimony with their blood, many faithful men who have not so suffered must be excluded. It must, therefore, include all such as *would* suffer to the death rather than yield to the direction of an Antichristian head. And of all those who held fast the headship of CHRIST, and would not give that honour unto another, it is written, "They had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands." Here again we may also remark, in confirmation of that part of our interpretation of the beast and his image, in which we showed that this mystery of iniquity has a secondary application to *all* periods of the Christian dispensation, that if these forms of evil are only manifested at the end of the age *after* the taking away of the saints or the first-fruits, (as some commentators have imagined,) then no previous martyr can be of the number of the saints who reign with CHRIST; because these are designated as a class who have overcome the beast and his image. The interpretation of this mystery we have already given in Part V. of this work.

Compare  
Heb. i. 8.

Dan. vii. 18.

It is said of these faithful ones, that "they lived and reigned with CHRIST a thousand years." It is written of the LORD JESUS in Psalm xlv., "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." And of those who are heirs with Him, it is said, "they shall possess the kingdom, for ever, even for ever and ever." We are not, therefore, to understand that their reign with CHRIST terminates at the end of the thousand years, but that these persons shall have their faithfulness rewarded by being made partakers of this glory and blessedness, previously to the general resurrection, and before their less faithful brethren, who although they

may have cherished that faith in CHRIST, which has secured their eternal salvation, yet are not partakers of *this* reward. The honour and glory of reigning with CHRIST at His appearing and kingdom, are the inheritance of those only, who are partakers of the first resurrection. Hence it is written in the following words, “But the *rest* of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished ;” that is, those who are not distinguished by the designation of being “beheaded for the witness of JESUS,” are not raised at CHRIST’S appearing, and consequently do not reign with Him in His kingdom. “This is the first resurrection.”

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of GOD and of CHRIST, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” Those who are accounted worthy to attain unto the resurrection from among the dead, are further distinguished as being pre-eminently blessed and holy. As the LORD JESUS, who rose from the dead as the first-fruits of them that slept, was the Blessed and Holy One, so those who are raised at His coming, are “*they that are* <sup>1 Cor. xv. 23.</sup> CHRIST’S ;” and they are *like* Him, being made “con- <sup>Phil. iii. 10.</sup> formable unto His death,” and having “purified them- <sup>1 S. John iii. 3.</sup> selves even as He is pure.” They are therefore truly Blessed and Holy ; and that they are so, will be fully seen at the glorious manifestation of the sons of GOD. For having been raised to eternal life, and eternal judgment having been passed upon them, there can be no danger or possibility of their coming into the second death. “On such the second death hath no power ;” which is an additional proof that this is a literal, and not a spiritual resurrection ; for of those who are pri-

vileged to share, in any way, the glories of the millennial kingdom, none but such as have attained unto the resurrection from the dead, or whose bodies are changed at the coming of the LORD, are placed beyond the power of falling away ; and this declaration also refutes the still more inconsistent interpretation of regarding the first resurrection as signifying regeneration, or the being raised with CHRIST in baptism. They are also said to be “ priests unto God and the Lamb, and to reign with Him a thousand years.” This is a privilege and honour which belongs exclusively to them.

Heb. vii.

They are not only kings but priests ; that is, they are of the priesthood of Melchisedec, who was king of Salem and priest of the Most High God ; which is by interpretation, first King of righteousness, and after that also King of peace. For it is written of CHRIST, “Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec ;” and the saints of the first resurrection will partake of the same glory—“Priests of God and of CHRIST.” Men in a former dispensation were priests of God, but not priests of CHRIST ; they were not constituted members of His body ; and none who are not of His body, can head up all things, and minister as priests and kings for and over all. This high prerogative belongs only to CHRIST and His Church. There will doubtless be those on the earth who will serve under the glorified Church ; that is, a priesthood constituted among men, in the *earthly* Jerusalem ; whilst those who are priests of God, and of CHRIST, are of the heavenly.

The thousand years during which they reign with CHRIST, is that age commonly called the millennium ; which must be understood literally. It would be unreasonable to speak of it as of eternal duration, as

some have done, because it is expressly said, that the general resurrection takes place *afterwards*—after that age has run its course. Nor does there appear to be any reason why we should suppose it to be longer than the time here specified, according to the rule laid down in the interpretation we have given of the three years and a half, and of other periods ; not, however, denying, that in the interpretation of prophetic numbers, days are very frequently used for years. But as a general principle, the safe mode of interpretation ; is to take the literal sense, unless the words used, and the manner of using them, be evidently symbolic, and cannot consistently admit of a literal interpretation ; as in the case where, according to the letter, we might infer that all who partake of the first resurrection were “*beheaded* for the witness of JESUS.”

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle : the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.” The event which is here announced as taking place after the expiration of the millennium, or thousand years, is perhaps the most wonderful the world has seen since the fall of man, or ever will see, and may well cause us to tremble in contemplating the power which Satan is capable of putting forth. That any should fall away from their redemption standing after the millennium, would appear to be less excusable than the fall of our first parents in Paradise, because men will not only have heard the report of eternal blessedness reserved for the saints, but will have seen it exhibited before them in the glorious manifestation of the sons of God. The promise of eternal life to them

that overcome, will no longer be an article of faith, but a fact manifested to sight and to sense. And that any should fall into the snare of the devil who have witnessed, or tasted millennial blessedness, affords the strongest proof, that until man has passed into this resurrection life, he is not safe from apostacy. It is also revealed in this prophecy, that a very large portion of the inhabitants of the earth during the millennial age, are men in mortal bodies, not having passed through death ; otherwise Satan could not have any power over them, as our LORD Himself hath said, “ the children of the resurrection cannot die any more.”

S. Luke xx.  
36.

In what the peculiar form of Satan's delusion may consist, is not specified in words, but the effect produced by it reveals to us its spirit and character. As Satan has ever sought to possess himself of the throne of the Man CHRIST JESUS, and to usurp that power which the LORD alone can legitimately exercise over man as his Creator and Redeemer ; and as *before* the millennium he will prevail so far as to set up a mockery or counterfeit of the kingdom of CHRIST in the universal worship of the beast ; so at the end of that age of blessedness, and notwithstanding all the superior advantages enjoyed by mankind, he will prevail to deceive and draw away many from their true allegiance to CHRIST. And this last work of Satan, and the falling away of the creature at the close of such a glorious dispensation, showing that the rebellion of man and the malice of Satan can resist every effort even of God Himself, will be a justification of the eternal punishment of Satan, and wicked men, in the lake of fire which burneth for ever and ever.

The number deceived by Satan at the end of the millennial age, are said to be as “ the sand of the sea !”

“Gog and Magog,” here referred to, form the subject of prophecy by Ezekiel in the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters; and the mention of their names in these last visions of the Apocalypse, in connection with events subsequent to the millennial age, the description of the judgment which comes upon them, the time in which it is fulfilled, and the character of the people against whom they come—clearly intimate that the subject of Ezekiel’s prophecy belongs to this period, and not to any event connected with the personal Antichrist previous to the millennium. For although the prophecy referred to in Ezekiel, concerning the invasion of the land of Israel, by Gog and Magog, will have the *shadow* of its fulfilment under the combined armies of Antichrist, yet this will be *only* a shadow or type of those whom Satan shall gather against Jerusalem at the *end* of the millennial kingdom or reign of CHRIST and His Saints; even as the prophecy of our LORD, in the New Testament, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, awaits yet a further and more complete fulfilment. And looking at the prophecy of Ezekiel in this light, as to its substance and extent, we gather from it an idea of the circumstances and condition of men during the age of the millennium; and infer that, glorious as that state of blessedness may be, the earth and its inhabitants will not pass into that celestial and ethereal form of being which some have imagined. For we learn that the greater part of the world will be still living in mortal flesh; that seedtime and harvest, labour and industry, trade and commerce, will continue, although there be an universal brotherhood of nations, the knowledge of the LORD prevailing, and righteousness and equity regulating the conditions of men. Neither will they be tempted by any evil power, Satan

being bound ; nor oppressed by unrighteous rulers ; the administration of all government being under the immediate direction of CHRIST, and His risen saints. Nevertheless, when the thousand years have expired, Satan, being loosed out of his prison for a little season, will succeed in his attempt to deceive the nations in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle ; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

“ And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city ; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever.” The camp of the saints, and the beloved city, are descriptive of two bodies or conditions of persons. The first, is a term applied to the *risen* saints, who form the body of CHRIST ; and the latter, to the Jerusalem on the earth, or men in the flesh. We are led to this distinction, from the fact, that the dwelling of the saints is not described as a city till after the general resurrection ; whilst we know that the Jerusalem upon earth will have been rebuilt ; in which the LORD Himself will appear, sitting upon the throne of His father David—the true Solomon of the millennial age.

Eze. xxxviii.  
28 ; and  
xxxix. 6.

The destruction also of the apostate multitude, by fire from heaven, is evidently alluded to in the prophecy of Ezekiel ; after which act of judgment, man will never again have the opportunity of standing up in open warfare against the LORD and His anointed : for, from henceforth, the dwelling place of Satan will be in the lake of fire, prepared for the devil and his



angels ; into which the beast and the false prophet were cast a thousand years before. This previous judgment, is doubtless a sign of the superior advantages, which they upon whom it comes have received, over evil spirits ; namely, that they have had the opportunity of being saved from this fearful judgment, which Satan and his angels have not. For this lake of fire, was not prepared for men, but for devils. We are also forewarned, that this condition has no end ; the same words being used in reference to the state of the blessed, and even to the eternal being of God Himself ; and we have no more reason to suppose that the one will cease than the other. As “in the ages to come, God will show the exceeding riches of His grace towards us in CHRIST JESUS,” so will the condemnation of the wicked be eternal.

“And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away ; and there was found no place for them.” The next vision presented to the Apostle, is that of the last, or general judgment, by the Son of Man—all judgment being committed unto Him. The “*great white throne*” represents the consummate righteousness of Him who sitteth thereon. By “*the earth and the heavens fleeing away from before His face,*” we are to understand, the entire disappearing and removal of all evil occasioned by the sin of man, whether in the natural or spiritual : in the earth beneath, or in the heaven above. Not that any part of creation shall be annihilated or cease to be ; but, on the contrary, that it shall be renewed, and changed, and made meet for the presence of CHRIST and His Saints ; according to the words of S. Peter, when, speaking of the perishing of the old world by water, he says, “The heavens and

2 S. Pet. iii.  
5—13.

the earth which now are, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. And the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up; nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." In like manner does S. Paul describe the *changing* of the present heavens and earth and the making of them new, by the similitude of an old garment laid aside, and supplied by a new one. And in the passage here referred to, the words quoted by the Apostle from the forty-fifth Psalm, clearly express the same truth as that implied by the "great *white throne*:" for the LORD JESUS CHRIST, by Whom these things are wrought—"the righteous one"—is thus introduced, "Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of *righteousness* is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved *righteousness*, and hated iniquity, therefore GOD, even Thy GOD hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. And, Thou LORD, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands. They shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same and Thy years shall not fail." Thus will the earth and the heavens pass away before the face of Him Who sitteth upon the throne, and no place be found for them in their present condition. But the new heavens and the new earth, which the LORD shall create, shall remain for ever, and be in substance what they were at the beginning of the creation;

Heb. i. 8—  
12.

though surpassing in glory, not only their present condition, but their original condition before the fall of man; even as man, though created anew in CHRIST JESUS, is the same creature as before, and will ever remain the same, touching his being and constitution as a man, even when changed and clothed with immortality.

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” All mankind shall now *stand before* God; that is, before the LORD JESUS CHRIST, Who is GOD: for in no sense can men stand before God, except as He is manifested in CHRIST; and in those whom CHRIST uses as ordinances under Him; through whom He acts. “*And the books were opened.*” This record, containing the character and destinies of men, which is put in the plural, evidently refers to the wicked who are raised at this time; because we are told that there is another book, containing the names, the character, and the deeds of the *righteous*. As folded papers or parchments are called books, and are important, not because of their form, but on account of the matter they contain; so the term books is here used emblematically to represent the revelation which will then be made of the character and condition of those who shall stand before the LORD. The term “*books*,” denoting more than one, seems to have special reference to the wicked who lived under different ages or dispensations, who will be judged according to the light and advantages they have severally abused. Such for instance as the unbelievers of the Patriarchal age; the ungodly who perished in the flood; the faithless of the Abrahamic

and Mosaic ages ; the apostates under the Christian age, and those who are deceived by Satan and fall away from their allegiance to CHRIST at the end of the millennial age. Further, as it is said that those who stood before God, were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their *works* ; and yet that all were cast into the lake of fire who were not found written in the book of life ; it follows, that in this final judgment there are degrees of suffering ; otherwise there would be no meaning in their being judged out of the several *books*, and according to their *works*. The condemnation of all, who are not found written in the book of life, will be eternal ; but all will not be subjected to the same degree of suffering. There being “ a *book of life opened*,” implies also, that many who are finally *saved*, will not partake of the resurrection unto eternal life until this general judgment. The book of life being opened at this time, and the names of those, who are found written therein being *now* declared, is a striking confirmation of the ideas we have before expressed on this subject.

“ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it ; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them : and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” “ *θάλασσα* ” is here rightly interpreted “ *sea*.” The immense multitudes which have perished in the mighty waters, as well as those who are in their graves, will now come forth, and stand before God, and be judged righteously by the Man CHRIST JESUS. “ *Death and Hades*,” also, delivered up the dead which were in them. Death is

here meant to signify the separation of the soul from the body ; and Hades, the abode of departed spirits. And their delivering up the dead which were in them plainly shows that there is no longer any power in existence, which can hinder man from appearing in that perfect condition of his being—body, soul, and spirit—in which God created him ; and that none of the dead, whether great or small, will be able to withstand the summons of the Son of Man : for all who were not partakers of the first resurrection, shall now come forth ; some to the resurrection of life, and some to the resurrection of damnation.

Death and Hades being cast into the lake of fire, shows that the soul shall never more be separated from the body, and that the former condition of the departed shall cease to be. To the wicked, this shall be succeeded by a more terrible death, even the everlasting punishment of both body and soul in the fire which shall never be quenched. This is called "*the second death*;" and is an event which succeeds the general resurrection ; and to which our LORD probably referred, when He said—"Be not afraid of them that kill the body and after that have no more that they can do, but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear ; fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell ; yea, I say unto you, fear Him." S. Luke xii.  
4, 5.

The casting of Death and Hades into the lake of fire, may also imply that the locality which is now occupied by separate spirits, shall after the general judgment, become a part of that place from whence the flames of unquenchable fire and eternal burnings shall ascend. These remarks throw some light on the idea, that the probable locality of this lake of fire, will be in the bowels or heart of the earth, as there is good reason to

conclude from the words of Scripture, that Hades is situated therein. As for instance, in the saying of our LORD,—“As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

The Apostle Paul says, that our LORD “descended into the lower parts of the earth.” When Samuel appeared to Saul, he said, “Why hast thou troubled me to *bring me up*?” And the woman that raised him up said, “I see as it were gods ascending *out of the earth*.”

Of Dathan and Abiram it is said, “They went down quick into the pit,” i.e., into Hades, as in the original.

S. Matt. xii.  
40.

Eph. iv. 9.

1 Sam.  
xxviii.Num. xvi.  
30 and 33.

If this place is hereafter to form a part of “the lake of fire,” and if the locality in which those abide who suffer the pain of the second death, is to be in the heart of the earth; then have we strong reason to infer that a literal fire is here intended, as well as what it may symbolically represent. And as all who are not found written in the book of life, shall be cast, (their entire being, body and soul,) into hell, into a real *place*; the lake of fire which shall occupy that locality, will doubtless be real. The fact that the locality of those that perish is in a literal place, and must not be understood as a mere figure, assures us that the place of torment is not only a condition of mental and spiritual agony, but of bodily suffering also. And as the lake of fire will be real, so will the suffering be eternal. “Where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.” The condition of those who are cast into the lake of fire being called “the second death,” implies a previous death and resurrection, and the eternal torment which they must endure both in *body* and *soul*.

S. Mark ix.  
44.

## PART XV.

THE NEW CREATION. THE NEW JERUSALEM. THE THRONE OF GOD AND THE LAMB. THE TREE OF LIFE. THE GLORY OF THE CHURCH OF GOD. THE CERTAINTY OF THESE THINGS. THE NAMES OF CHRIST. THE INVOCATION. THE SANCTION AND SACREDNESS OF THE BOOK. THE DECLARATION AND RESPONSE. THE BENEDICTION.

### THE NEW CREATION.

1 AND I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first Rev. xxi. heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, *and be* their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

5 And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6 And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all

liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God;

11 Having the glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

12 And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, *according to* the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

18 And the building of the wall of it was *of* jasper: and the city *was* pure gold, like unto clear glass.

19 And the foundations of the wall of the city *were* garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation *was* jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chryso-prasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

21 And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city *was* pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY and the Lamb are the temple of it.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon,



to shine in it : for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof.

24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it : and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day : for there shall be no night there.

26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie : but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

WE are now come to the last two chapters of this book, which describe the completion of God's purpose in "the new heaven and the new earth." This was the far end of God which was foreshown from the beginning, the type of which was seen in the heaven and earth as they came forth from the hand of their Creator. The Scripture opens with an account of this foreshowing of God's purpose in the great work of creation; and closes with a description of the antitype, even the new heaven and the new earth, as they shall appear in their renewed and eternal condition. The former was headed up in Adam, who was a figure of Him that was to come; the latter, in the Second Adam, which is the LORD from heaven, by whom, and for whom, all things were created and made. And if the first heaven, and the first earth were pronounced "very good," not merely in themselves, but because they contained and shadowed forth "the eternal purpose of God, which He purposed in CHRIST JESUS before the world began," how glorious must the new heavens and new earth be in which that eternal purpose shall be fulfilled !

In these closing remarks, we cannot refrain from

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adverting to the chronological arrangement, and order of events as revealed in the prophecy of this book. For in it we learn that a period of seven thousand years intervenes between the type and antitype ; during which time God has been electing and preparing a people for His praise and for His glory, who shall inherit the work of His hands, and be a means of blessing to the whole creation of God. This account of the new creation has been made to synchronize with the millennial age. But this opinion is clearly untenable, inasmuch as it describes a condition of things not to be realized during that age, but subsequently to it. For instance, it is said, " There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." Whereas we know that during the millennium, there is death, and that death is not destroyed till the end of that age, when it is cast into the lake of fire. Satan is only bound and shut up in prison during that age ; at the end of it he is loosed for a little season, and goes up on the breadth of the earth, and deceives the nations, and those who are deceived by him are destroyed ; it cannot, therefore, be said, " the former things have passed away," seeing that death, suffering, and pain are included in them. Again, it is said in the judgment after the millennium, that " the sea gave up the dead which were in it," whereas in the new creation it is declared " there was no more sea ;" consequently if this describes the millennial age, there is a manifest contradiction ; for how can the sea give up its dead if there be no sea ? Some may endeavour to explain this away by saying that the sea means a tumultuous and lawless people, and that as this state of turbulence among the nations shall cease during the mil-

lennium, the expression, "there was no sea," may be truly applied to this period; but to consider "the sea" in this passage as bearing the same signification as "the waters" in chapter xvii. 16—which are expressly declared to be "peoples and multitudes, and nations and tongues,"—contradicts the plain words of Scripture, which speaks of the nations, not as swept from the face of the earth, but as walking in the light of the new Jerusalem, the Holy City which cometh down from God out of heaven. Unless the sea be interpreted literally, we cannot so understand the new heavens and the new earth, and this would necessarily lead to a denial of the words of the Apostle Peter, who without any figure of speech, refers to the destruction of the old world by water, and declares that the heavens and the earth which are now, are reserved unto fire; but that "we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." From these considerations, therefore, we cannot agree either with those who speak of the new heavens and new earth as a mystical representation of the Church; or with those who say that the new creation here described exists during the millennial reign of the Lord; but must strenuously maintain, what we consider to be the true interpretation, namely, that the new heavens and the new earth are not formed till after the millennium; and that the description here given of the new creation, represents the fulfilment of the eternal purpose of God, which He purposed in CHRIST JESUS from the beginning; and which is brought into manifestation after the general judgment and perdition of ungodly men, as declared by S. Peter. And this new creation shall not pass away, but shall remain for ever and ever.

We may also add, in confirmation of this view, as fixing the true chronology of these chapters, that the week of creation, or the week of days in which God wrought, including the one on which He rested from His work, consisted of *seven*; and looking upon each of these days as representing a thousand years, according to the intimation of S. Peter, in the revelation of the new heavens and the new earth; the analogy requires that seven thousand years should run their course before the new heavens and new earth appear. And we expect that most, if not all commentators, who believe in the millennial reign of our LORD, consider that this period of millennial blessedness, is the anti-type of the day of rest, upon which God rested from all His works at the beginning.

We may here observe, that as the Jewish dispensation was typical of the Christian, and as in this age the kingdom of God is only seen in a *mystery*; so also the new heavens and new earth, which are not created till after the general judgment at the end of the millennium, will have their shadow in that age. In the millennial age, the kingdoms of this world will be under the immediate rule of the LORD and His risen saints; the Jews will be restored to their own land; their temple and city will be rebuilt, and all the tribes shall go up thither to worship the LORD of Hosts; and these events will lead to, and prepare the way for, that great work of God, when He shall make all things new. Hence these events, which are far apart in point of time, are apparently connected in the Old Testament prophecies; but when understood, the foregoing events in such prophecies are seen to be a *shadow* only of the ulterior object of consummation. The eye of the prophet resting on the far end of God,

speaks of it in connexion with the nearer objects he beholds, as one great whole, without noticing the distinct periods, or lapse of time, in the sequence of events. Thus Isaiah spoke of the birth of CHRIST, Isa. ix. 6, 7. and of His sitting upon the throne of David as simultaneous acts, though the latter has not yet been fulfilled. In like manner, our LORD spoke of events, which should close the Jewish dispensation with those which should occur at the end of the Christian, as one, or as taking place at the same time; whereas the one is a type or shadow of the other. Of such a character, is the construction of the prophecy of Isaiah, in which he speaks of events connected with the millennium kingdom of CHRIST, with those which shall follow at the end of that age, when He shall create the new heavens and the new earth. But in this book of the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, we have not only the light of the foregoing Scriptures concentrated, but the chronology in the sequence and order of events clearly narrated and defined.

It is important to observe, before we proceed further with the interpretation of these chapters, that they do not consist wholly of visions, but that there are many explanatory and admonitory remarks introduced as well. Thus for instance, we read in the seventh and eighth verses, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son. But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." These words cannot mean, that in the new heavens and new earth men are put again in a state of probation, or that there

Isa. lxxv. 17  
—25; lxxvi.  
19—24.

is in that new condition anything to be overcome ; but they are written for *our* admonition, and to teach us seriously to reflect, that those only who overcome now, shall inherit the promises, and partake of this glory, when He maketh all things new. So also the list of the reprobate here mentioned, does not imply that there will be any such persons present in the new creation, but the contrary ; for they are said to have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. The words "*shall have*"—written in italics—are not in the original, and must not be regarded as implying a future condition of the wicked, which would pass upon them subsequently to the events revealed in the *visions* of these chapters ; but as an affirmation that they *are* in the lake of fire, having been cast into it at the judgment recorded in the foregoing chapter. These remarks will apply to the words contained in chapter xxii. 14, 15, which describe the condition of the blessed and the reprobate.

In the second verse of this chapter it is written, "And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." This is a description of the Elect Church, which had been previously espoused unto One Husband, and presented as a chaste virgin unto CHRIST ; for we read in the ninth verse that this holy city is the "bride, the Lamb's wife." We must not infer from the similarity of the expression here used, to those in chapter xix., with reference to the Bride and the marriage supper, that the two visions synchronize with each other ; for in the former the marriage was evidently spoken of as about to be consummated ; and from the fact of its celebra-

tion at the time there assigned to it in the prophecy, we learn that the first day of its enjoyment will be the seventh period of time—the millennial day ; even as the day on which God united Adam and Eve, the type of CHRIST and His Church, in holy wedlock, was their first day, though the seventh of the world's creation. And in perfect analogy and keeping with the light there given, are the expressions used in the visions before us. For here, the holy city, New Jerusalem, which descendeth down from God out of heaven, is likened unto a bride adorned for her husband, not as though the marriage had not taken place, but the contrary ; for the city is expressly called “ the Bride, the Lamb's wife.”

When the Apostle saw the city descending, he heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, “ Behold the *tabernacle* of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.” These words give us another idea, in reference to this blessed condition. The tabernacle was a moveable habitation, and its sojournings and removals were always directed by God ; whilst the temple was fixed and stationary. The application of the term tabernacle, in this sense, seems to intimate a certain condition among men, even in the eternal state, (distinct from the elect body,) who are symbolized by the tabernacle ; for it is expressly said concerning them, not that God dwells *in* them, but *with* them ; while of the city it is written, that the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY and the Lamb are the temple of it. And it is certain that the city is the elect *body* of CHRIST, perfect in all its members ; of which it may be affirmed, that God dwelleth *in* it ; and this is a much higher condition than the presence

of God *with* men. There is, therefore, reason to believe, that there will ever be through eternal ages, this difference of glory between the Bride, the Body of CHRIST, and the rest of redeemed men.

“And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write : for these words are true and faithful.” It is evident that the Apostle in these words recurs to the vision in the preceding chapter, which represents the LORD as sitting “upon a great white throne, from whose presence the heavens and the earth fled away ;” because he had before stated, that he had seen the new heavens and the new earth. And what the Apostle heard Him, who sat upon the throne, say, is recorded in this portion of the prophecy, to assure us that God will certainly effect, or bring into manifestation the things represented in these visions ; and therefore he is commanded to write, that these words are true and faithful.

“And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” The LORD, speaking of things which are not as though they were, says, “It is done.” And again, describing Himself by the name He had taken up at the opening of the Apocalypse, He declares the freedom with which these things shall be given to those who will receive them. For this fountain of the water of life, is the Spirit of the Living God, who dwelleth in them.

Vide Rev. i.  
8.

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.” These, we must remember, are the words of the LORD, which S. John heard Him utter, when He sat upon the throne, described in the vision of the preceding chap-



ter. And it becometh Him well, to say so : for all things are His—His by creation and redemption—His as Head over all things to His church. And He giveth them to those who follow Him in this world of trial and temptation, and who overcome as He overcame. Those who stood before the throne, stood before God ; Rev. xx. 12. and He spake as God, because He is God, calling us sons.

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone : which is the second death.” This shall be the eternal condemnation of all that depart from CHRIST : and whilst the former words are recorded for our encouragement, these are written for our admonition : showing, as they do, that those who depart from CHRIST, not only lose their inheritance in the new creation, but subject themselves to the fire which never shall be quenched ; which is the second death.

“And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” We must remember that the things presented to the eye of the Apostle in these visions, are emblematic of future events ; and also, that the circumstances attending these visions, are likewise emblematic. The circumstances, therefore, under which this city is shown to the Apostle, seem to imply, that the mystery of it will be revealed, before the last of these vials is poured out ; and that, as it was a messenger of judgment, who showed him these wondrous things, so it will be at a time of judgment, that they will be made known to the Church.

“And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.” The Apostle being carried away in the spirit, shows us, that it is only as the Church rises up into her true and spiritual standing in CHRIST JESUS, that she will be able to apprehend the mystery of the New creation. This great and high mountain, to which the Apostle was carried, and from which he was shown the holy city, symbolizes a great kingdom; and implies that, at the end of this dispensation, the Church will again manifest her spiritual character and endowments; and also that this mystery of God will be made known to a revived Apostleship, in some mighty kingdom upon earth. And as S. John was shown the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven, so we may expect the Church in these last days will behold this great mystery of God revealed; and also see the shadow of its fulfilment in the church. For we have already learnt from other prophecies, that the LORD will “revive His work in the midst of the years, and in the midst of the years make known” His eternal purpose, which shall be seen in “the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” Indeed it cannot be otherwise; for as the bride is said in the nineteenth chapter to make herself ready for the coming of the LORD, so must this mystery be seen in the Church, in order that she may be prepared. And one of the most certain indications of the nearness of the coming of the bridegroom, will be the preparedness of the bride for the marriage. Hence the importance of this vision, and the practical use we should make of it: for if we are to constitute a part of the bridal city, we must realize that we are mem-

Hab. iii. 2;  
and 2 S. Pet.  
iii. 13.

bers of that body or constitution, of which the things contained in this vision are symbolic. The city is described as :—

“ Having the glory of God ; and her light like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone clear as crystal.” We have before seen from this prophecy, that while God dwelleth *with* men on the earth, it is the peculiar privilege and dignity of the Church or bridal city, that He should dwell *in* her. In like manner she is here spoken of, as *having* the glory of God ; that is, possessing it as her own peculiar inheritance. For though, in the ages to come, “ the whole earth shall be filled with His glory,” that glory will emanate from the Church of CHRIST, which is His Body, the fulness of Him by which He filleth all things. As S. John said, “ No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten SON, which is in the bosom of the FATHER, He hath declared Him,” so it is only in and by the Church, that He can be fully known, Who is the brightness of the FATHER’s glory, and the express image of His person. “ The light of the city is like unto a stone most precious, even like unto a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” The Apostle Peter speaks of CHRIST as “ a stone most precious ;” and in Revelation iv. He is compared to “ a jasper and a sardine stone ;” and the description of this light being, that it is clear as crystal, shows, the exceeding purity of that light which He giveth to the Church by the HOLY GHOST. “ He is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” And as this glory and light of God are said to be in the city, so should we expect to find them in His Church in these days, in order to prepare her for that high condition which is here represented. For the Church, as we have said, will contain the light and

Eph. i. 23.

S. John i. 18.

Heb. i. 3.

1 S. Pet. ii. 4.

1 S. John i. 5.

glory of the holy city in a mystery ; that, as the present dispensation was shadowed forth in the former, so the realities of the eternal condition should find their image in this—the millennial and intervening age—which is but a further developement of the glory to be afterwards revealed in the new heavens and the new earth. It is by adopting this principle of interpretation, we are led to believe, that these symbols have a present application to the Church of CHRIST, even as our present body is a type or figure of that spiritual  
1 Cor. xv. 49. body which we shall receive at the resurrection : “ for as we have borne the image of the earthy, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly.” CHRIST, therefore, in all things, should be set forth in His Church, as the glorious prototype, unto which we are to be transformed.

“ And the city had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.” The wall of a city is for its beauty and completeness ; and as a defence in time of danger. The wall therefore encircling the holy city, must represent the glory and defence of the Church ; and being universal in its extent, must embrace all within its sacred inclosure. There is nothing in the Church analogous to this, save an universal or ecumenical council ; and such we believe the construction of this wall to represent. That its most important function *now* should be that of defence, is but the accident of its present existence ; and must not be confounded with the ultimate use and purpose of this boundary of the holy city ; even as a man may be obliged to use his arms to defend his life, though they were made for other purposes ; and are not so needed

in time of peace. We must be careful not to confound the present aspect of the Church, in its militant state, with its eternal condition: and we must bear in mind that, although the holy city will not hereafter need defence as a means of preservation from assault, having no enemies to assail it, yet the eternal reality symbolized by this "Wall great and high," will be ever necessary to its perfection and usefulness; even as man's body is not perfect, or capable of fulfilling all its functions, if any part be lacking. And if the Church is to fulfil her functions of counsel and guardianship to the whole universe; which, as the bridal and metropolitan city she will exercise, then, such a council may be composed of delegates from every part of God's creation over which the saints shall bear rule. The wall being "great and high," shows the importance of the functions thus exercised; and the object, influence, and eternal import, of such a council.

The wall of the city had also twelve gates, twelve angels at the gates, and twelve foundations. It has this number because the Church in its unity, is composed of twelve sections; each embodying in itself some special character and peculiar privilege. And because this is the eternal and immutable character of the Church, the body of CHRIST; the literal Israel were divided into twelve tribes; whose character and privileges were typical of those of the spiritual Israel, the true seed of Abraham. Hence also, the twelve precious stones in the breastplate of the High Priest, represent the spiritual character of the Church in its twelfefoldness.

The twelve gates represent those ordinances in the Church which are for admission: and the twelve angels—one at each gate—those messengers

or persons, whose duty it is, to watch over and preserve the city inviolate. The inscription of the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on the gates, implies, that those only, who are the true seed or spiritual Israel, will be able to enter. The wall of the city having three gates on each side towards the four quarters of the heavens, represents to us, that these means of entrance are fourfold in their character, answering to the four ministries of the Church ; which are a part of its very being and constitution ; and necessary for its preservation and perfection. The symbolism here used, reminds us of the site of the camp of Israel ; which, in common with every thing concerning the chosen people, may be regarded as shadowing forth some heavenly thing. The camp of Israel encircling the Tabernacle, consisted of twelve tribes ; divided into four sections of three tribes each. Three encamped on the east, three on the north, three on the south, and three on the west ; and the whole, including the tabernacle, was headed up, as it were, by the Shechina, or presence of God in the cloud of glory ; out of which cloud, the LORD appeared and spake unto His people as their King, their Ruler, and Guide. Although these shadows of heavenly things, relate to the ulterior and surpassing glory to be seen in the new heavens and new earth, when this city shall descend from God out of heaven, and when the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He shall dwell with them and be their God ; yet will they receive a partial fulfilment, in the perfecting of the Church of CHRIST at His appearing and kingdom ; when she shall be presented as a chaste virgin unto Him ; and also in the millennial age, previously to the *descent* of the new Jerusalem.

“*The four winds*,” are emblems used in the Scriptures to denote the four ministries of CHRIST. The *east*, <sup>Eze. xxxvii. 9.</sup> presents the idea of rule and government; the wind from this quarter is keen and piercing, and in itself painful to bear; the sun also, the ruler of the day rises from the east: we may therefore observe an appropriate significance in these emblematic peculiarities, as symbolic of the Apostolic office. The *north*, gives the idea of darkness and death; and the wind from this quarter, represents that form of the Spirit’s operation which withers up the flesh and brings it into death; out of which state, God can cause spiritual light and life to arise. It therefore aptly symbolizes the prophetic office which reveals the light and life of CHRIST, as <sup>Eph. v. 14.</sup> proceeding out of the death of the natural man: for as by virtue of the sacrifice and death of CHRIST, the HOLY GHOST was given, so by the Word of His power He quickeneth and enlighteneth them that believe. The genial *south* wind, which produces warmth and quickens life throughout God’s creation, causing the flowers to spring forth and all nature to teem with vitality, is a beautiful emblem of the message of peace, or evangelist’s ministry which proclaiming the love of God, and reconciliation through the blood of CHRIST, is effectual to the quickening of those, dead in trespasses and sins; and by the warmth of its love prevails over the coldness and resistance of the natural man, and draws him to God. And the balmy and gentle *west* wind represents the blessing which comes through the pastoral office, in the care, and healing, ministered to the flock.

“And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.” The first act of God preparatory to those

gifts of ministry, and the sending of the HOLY GHOST, for the building and perfecting of His Church, was the appointment of twelve men, whom He called apostles. These were first chosen, that upon them as foundations, the wall or defences of the Church should rest, and find their stability; JESUS CHRIST Himself being the chief corner stone; which is indeed implied in the call to that holy office. For as none but the LORD JESUS could call and appoint men to that office, so none but He could hold them together as one, and enable them to fulfil its functions. Wherefore "He charged them to remain in Jerusalem till they were endued with power from on high," in the gift of the HOLY GHOST, which they should receive of Him. They are said to be the twelve apostles of the *Lamb*; because men were called to the apostolic office in the day of our LORD's humiliation; and in relation to, and by virtue of, the sacrifice which He offered, once for all, as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. The names of the twelve apostles being in the foundation stones of the wall of the holy city, shows that they are eternal ordinances, and essential to the building. Without these, no work or acting of God in His Church can be complete: "Ye shall bear witness," saith the LORD; "and the HOLY GHOST also." The Church of God is Apostolic, not only because apostles were given at the beginning—not because she *once* had them—but because they have ever been in her. The office of apostles, can no more cease in the Church than the Church, itself can cease. Remove the foundations and the building must fall. And only in proportion as the apostolic office has been manifested, in the exercise of its holy functions, has the Church been a blessing to the world, and acknow-

S. Luke  
xxiv. 49.

Vide S. John  
xv. 26, 27.

Acts v. 32.



ledged as sent of GOD. The man CHRIST JESUS should ever have been manifested in a twelvefold apostleship; and we learn from the Scriptures, that it has only been otherwise, through resistance made to the HOLY GHOST in those ordinances and ministries of the LORD. "As My FATHER hath sent Me," saith our LORD; "even so send I you." "He that heareth you heareth Me." "Lo, I am with you alway unto the end of the age."

S. John xx.  
21.

S. Luke x.  
16.

S. Matt.  
xxviii. 20.

"And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof." We have already learnt from the eleventh chapter, that "*the reed*" is an emblem of the Word of God, as the only rule by which He will measure His Church; and the reed being made of *gold*, shows the purity of that word. No building will endure, or be acknowledged of God, unless it answers to this measure. Everything shall be measured by this *golden reed*, the city and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof; that is, the Church, its ordinances, and its defences.

"And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length, and the breadth, and the height thereof, are equal." The measuring reed being a symbol of the Word of God, we are led to regard the language here used concerning the city itself, and its measure, as also symbolic. That the foundation stones are to be so considered, there can be no doubt, for they are declared to be Apostles; consistency, therefore, and analogy of interpretation, oblige us to interpret what is here spoken of the city, in like manner. The city, therefore, being "*four-square*," is expressive of the four-fold character of

CHRIST'S Church, in its very nature and constitution. That fourfoldness of capacity and ministerial function which is in the Head, is also in the Body. The *measure* of the city also, which is said to be 12,000 stadia, (*σταδίων*;) cannot be a literal measure; for what can a literal measure have to do with the truth? That which the measure of the city symbolizes, may be seen by referring to S. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, where the same word is used (*στάδιον*) in relation to a race in which the Grecians ran to obtain some temporary honour; and the Apostle takes up the subject, and applies it to the Christian Church, saying, "Know ye not that they which run in a race (*σταδίων*) run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain." If we who have entered on the Christian course, would attain unto the prize of the high calling of God in CHRIST JESUS, we must, as members of the One Body of CHRIST, set before us no lower measure than that which He hath given us; conforming ourselves unto Him in all things, that we may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means we may attain unto the resurrection from the dead. This is the *στάδιον* in which we are to run, and the prize we are to attain; we conclude, therefore, from the application which the Apostle makes of this word, that the *στάδιον* in the vision before us, is symbolic of, and used to denote the character of those who have so run as to obtain; and that none would form any part in the holy city, who have not answered to this description. 12,000 being the same number as the sealed ones of every tribe, with the addition of the word *σταδίων*, denotes, therefore, the spiritual glory and attainments of this elect number. The number also

1 Cor. ix. 24.

Vide Phil.  
iii. 8—14.

of persons who shall compose the Body of CHRIST, or this holy city, appears to be represented by the cube of 12,000, or the number 1,728,000,000,000, a number which, it is not improbable, may be gathered out of mankind before this city is manifested upon the earth. The cubic also, and not the *superficial* measure being here used, sets forth the spiritual glory, symbolized in this vision, as being *realized* by the elect, who *have* received the incorruptible inheritance, and entered into the joy of their LORD, as it is remarkable that the simple number twelve refers to the fleshly or typical condition under the law ; the square, or 144, to the spiritual or heavenly in this dispensation ; and the cube, or 1728, to the celestial or glorified state.

“ And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man ; that is, of the angel.” The wall being only 144 cubits, tends to confirm our previous interpretation of the measure of the city, because, turn it which way we will, as indicating a literal measure, we can never make it surround a city of 4,800,000 cubits ; for the city was 12,000 furlongs each way. The only possible form, therefore, in which we could look upon it in a literal sense, is in respect to its height ; which by calculation amounts to one  $33,333\frac{1}{3}$  part of the height of the city itself. But the absurdity of the idea, as well as the notion that any city could be a perfect cube, sufficiently justifies us, to say nothing of the inconsistency of the interpretation in other respects, in rejecting entirely the idea of a literal measure being here intended. Indeed, that the cubit is to be viewed in a symbolical, and not in a literal sense, is confirmed by its being applied to a *person* in the status of an angel ; for the cubit is said to be “ the measure of a man ; that is, of the angel.”

From which we also conclude, that the number itself, as well as the language, is symbolic, and intended by God, to conceal in a mystery, the number and perfections of His glorified saints; although, as we have before observed, there may also be an application to the Church in its present state, in being prepared for this eternal condition.

“And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.” The jasper being declared in the eleventh verse to be as clear as crystal, represents the transparent purity of those who are set as the defences and rulers of this heavenly city; in contradistinction to that dark and hidden policy, by which the present earth and heavens are governed. And as its defences are, so is the city itself; that is, the glorified saints, who are represented by these emblems. For they are those who have loved and walked in the truth, and showed themselves to be of it, even as pure gold is distinguished from all other metals; and they are void of all hypocrisy and deceit before God and man, even as transparent glass is opposed to opacity and obscurity.

“And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.” The description here given of the twelve foundations, represents the spiritual perfections of those who are set as judges over the spiritual Israel: for in these stones, we are told, are written the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. And to them our LORD

said, "Ye that have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of His glory; ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel;" that is, of the spiritual tribes; for the literal are not of this heavenly city. The *nature* of these precious stones, and their *crystallization*, upon which their *colour* depends, is significant of the spiritual character of the men whose names are written therein, as well as of the tribes they represent. And the whole, we believe, will make up or represent the spiritual glory which is contained in CHRIST. The shadow of this glory was seen in the breastplate, which was worn by the High Priest under the Law, containing the twelve precious stones, the first and last of which was a jasper and a sardine. In allusion to the same mystery, CHRIST is said to be "like a jasper and a sardine stone." And He is also called the Alpha and Omega, or as containing in Himself all word, and wisdom, and knowledge.

S. Matt. xix.  
28.

Vide Exod.  
xxviii. 15—  
21.

Rev. iv. 3.

"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." To discern the truth expressed by these emblems, and the consistency of their application, we must remember that the same glory is predicted of the Church of CHRIST as of Himself, for they are one; as our LORD said, "The glory which Thou, FATHER, hast given Me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are one." Hence, though other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is CHRIST JESUS, yet are there twelve foundations in the wall of the heavenly city, having the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb; for by them He confirms and establishes every word and act. In like manner CHRIST describes Himself, in

S. John xvii.  
23.

1 Cor. iii. 11.

the parable of the merchant-man, who is seeking goodly pearls, as the "one Pearl of great price;" yet His saints, who worship God in spirit and in truth, and partake of His preciousness, are indeed goodly pearls. And hence it is to be inferred most clearly, that these twelve gates of the bridal city, each of which is a several pearl, represent the ordinance for entrance into CHRIST's spiritual body, the city of the living God, as filled and exercised by men like unto CHRIST, in unsullied purity, integrity, and righteousness. As the *city* also, so is "the *street* thereof like unto pure gold, as it were transparent glass," which shows that the individuals composing the Church in this heavenly constitution, are such as are of the truth, and walk therein.

"And I saw no temple therein: for the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY and the Lamb are the temple of it." There being no temple in the holy city, reveals to us that what we call the liturgical forms of worship shall then have passed away; their end and object being attained in that new and glorified body in which God Himself dwells, even that body of CHRIST which is one with Him Who is the Lamb of God Who gave Himself for us. There was the shadow of this glory in the sacredness of the Most Holy Place under the law, which had no service in it similar to that which was daily performed in the Holy Place, but was the dwelling place of the Shechinah glory.

"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." The ordinances for the rule of the day and of the night in their symbolic application to the Church, have also passed away. The sun being the symbol of an out-

ward ordinance giving light, and the moon that of an ordinance reflecting light, we learn that in this perfect condition, outward rule and influence will be as it were superseded, or in other words, there will be no room for its exercise, every one of this city being "*perfect*, even as CHRIST Himself is perfect." With this agree the words of the Apostle Paul, who in relation to this perfect condition of the glorified Church, says, "Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether <sup>1 Cor. xiii. 8, 9, 10.</sup> there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." Such is the glorious perfection or constitution of the Church of CHRIST, as it shall be seen in the new creation; and unto His Body only it appertaineth. Therefore we read in the next verse—

"And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." The saved nations are here distinguished from the holy city in which God dwells: for they are spoken of as walking in the light of this glory, and not as having it in them. Therefore they come up to this city for light and judgment, for rule and guidance; and this they receive from the hands of the saints, the Body of CHRIST, which is His fulness and by which, as an instrument, He filleth all things. Moreover, the saved nations receive the light and glory of this heavenly city, through their heads or *kings*; who are, we believe, the Jewish people—the faithful seed of Abraham according to the flesh—who have attained to the honour which was promised them, even that of being "a nation of kings and priests."

“And the gates shall not be shut at all by day : for there shall be no night there.” These words again express the glorious perfections of the heavenly city, and show that there is nothing to hinder the saved nations from obtaining the light of God’s glory : for there is no night or darkness in this celestial city. And the way of access is free, and open unto all, because the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY and the Lamb would have all mankind to partake of its blessedness, and to walk in the light of its glory.

“And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.” The kings who rule over the saved nations shall bring their glory and honour into the New Jerusalem ; that is, they shall acknowledge its supremacy and divine constitution as that by which God, Who is its light and glory, shall bless mankind and fill the universe with the knowledge of His great name ; and they shall willingly ascribe all the prosperity and blessedness they enjoy, to the light and guidance they receive, in the exercise of their regal functions, through coming up to the holy city. Thus, they may truly be said to bring the glory and honour of the nations into the New Jerusalem, as a free will offering of thankfulness to God’s kings and priests, who reign over all things with Him, for ever : for of His kingdom there shall be no end.

“And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie : but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” These three characteristics, which are mentioned as entirely excluding those whom they designate, from admission into the city of God, appear to include all who sin against the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST ; and who have not been



cleansed from their defilement, and abominations, and lies. That which *defileth*, seems to have special reference to the sin committed against the FATHER, Who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and Who must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. That which *worketh abomination*, relates especially to sin committed against the SON of GOD: by and through Whom alone the FATHER is revealed and made known unto the sons of men; and Who, being one with the FATHER, requires that all men should honour the SON even as they honour the FATHER; and will not give His glory and honour unto another, or to any form or system of man's device; which is the abomination which maketh desolate, so fully denounced in this book. That which *maketh a lie*, has special reference to the sin committed against the HOLY GHOST; who is called "The Spirit of Truth," and given unto the Church to lead us into all truth. Whosoever denies His presence in the Church, or perverts the truth of CHRIST, which is revealed unto us by the HOLY GHOST, lies against Him. "Who is a liar (asks S. John,) but he that denieth that JESUS is the CHRIST?" And the Apostle further says, "that as the same anointing which ye have received, teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." The three expressions, that which *defileth*, or *worketh abomination*, or *maketh a lie*, are therefore closely associated, and are descriptive of the same class of persons: and none of these characters shall find any place, or entrance into the holy city, but those only who are written in the Lamb's book of life; that is, whose names have not been blotted out of that book through apostacy, but who have continued in the truth and walked therein. Reference is

<sup>1</sup> S. John ii.  
22 and 27.

made to this book in the preceding chapter, in the account of the last judgment at the end of the millenium, where it is stated that as many as were not found written therein, were cast into the lake of fire.

The following chapter is a continuation of these subjects and completes the wonderful prophecy of this book.

Rev. xxii.

1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of GOD and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of GOD and of the Lamb shall be in it: and His servants shall serve Him.

4 And they shall see His face: and His Name *shall be* in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun: for the LORD GOD giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

6 And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true: and the LORD GOD of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done.

7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things.

9 Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship GOD.

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

12 And behold I come quickly; and My reward *is* with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

14 Blessed *are* they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

16 I JESUS have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning star.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book :

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, LORD JESUS.

21 The grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST *be* with you all. Amen.

We have already remarked that the far end of God which was shadowed forth in the creation, is revealed to us in the closing chapters of the sacred volume, as fulfilled in the new state or condition of things exhibited in the new heavens, and new earth. The vision before us contains a revelation of that great mystery of God, which formed the foundation of all His works from the beginning of the creation. For "the pure water of life proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb," shows that all life proceeds from, and is sustained by, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, as the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. It was the purpose of God from the beginning, that the

creature should have his being and standing in CHRIST. Therefore did GOD create all things by JESUS CHRIST, that He might hereafter be manifestly the Head of all, upholding and sustaining all things by the Word of His power. And when the SON of GOD took human nature into union with Himself and was made man, it became manifest in what way stability and eternal duration should be given to the creature: for in that act there was the uniting of the finite unto the Infinite, the fallible unto the Infallible, the creature unto the Creator; and thereby not only was the creature, but the creation itself, lifted into its true position, according to the original design of the Creator. The creature could not have been formed otherwise than he was,—fallible and liable to fall. This was an essential condition of the creature. It was implied in his very being. For though created in the likeness of the image of God, with a mind and will free to act, yet he was not God, neither indeed could be. God could not create a being equal to, or independent of, Himself. The idea is unreasonable, and involves a palpable contradiction: for it is revealed to us, that there is only One living and true God. And in order that the creature might be eternally blessed, and possess everlasting life, God purposed to unite Himself to man, in the person of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. This is that link in the work of God, which was essential to the well-being of the creature, and which alone could render him infallible, or perpetuate his blessedness in the knowledge and love of God. The fall of the creature, indeed, proved that he could not stand apart from God. And the change in the creation, shows also that it cannot be a head unto itself, and is only rendered immutable by being headed up in CHRIST. And the

redemption which is in CHRIST JESUS, brings to light the secret of God's working from the beginning. For inasmuch as He gave His only begotten SON, laying the foundation of the glorious superstructure of His Church in the Incarnation, and sacrifice of CHRIST; He has most clearly shown, that it is the only way in which the creature *can* be sustained and eternally blessed. And man in this *new* creation, can never fall again; because he is linked to the throne of God, and is one with Him Who sits upon it. Under the former condition of things, at the creation, man sought to be a God unto himself, or equal unto God. But in the new heaven, and new earth, man will rejoice in his dependence upon God; knowing that he has not eternal life in himself, but only through his union with CHRIST. This mystery was hid in God from the beginning, Who created all things by JESUS CHRIST. And the grace of which we are made partakers, will hereafter be seen at the glorious manifestation of the sons of God.

"*The Throne of God and the Lamb*," out of which the pure water of life proceeds, is the throne of CHRIST. For He Who is here called *the Lamb*, is also God. It is not the throne of the FATHER, Who is essentially invisible, but of the SON—of God incarnate—God manifest in the flesh. The throne of CHRIST, being seen in the new heavens and earth, contradicts the idea of His vacating it at the end of the millenium, which some have entertained from a misconception of S. Paul's words in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, where it is written, that "When all things shall be subdued unto the SON, then shall the SON also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." This cannot mean that the LORD JESUS CHRIST will ever resign His

<sup>1</sup> Cor. xv.  
28.

throne, or cease to reign as King and Priest upon it :  
 Heb. vii. 24. for "He hath an unchangeable priesthood," and remain-  
 Ps. xlv. 6. eth a King for ever, and it is also written of Him in  
 S. Luke i. 33. another place, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and  
 ever." And again, "Of His kingdom there shall be  
 no end."

It is also said of the holy city, "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month : and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." The paradisaical state recorded in the second chapter of the book of Genesis is here evidently alluded to, as typical of the new heavens and new earth. There grew in the midst of the garden of Paradise a tree called "The tree of life ;" and there was one river which proceeded through the garden, dividing itself into four heads. In the vision before us also, there is one tree represented as growing in the street of the heavenly Jerusalem, the river being on either side of it. This we conceive to be the proper rendering of the passage. For there is only *one* tree here mentioned ; and it would be very inconsistent to say that the one tree grew on *each* side of the river. The *tree*, is doubtless an emblem either of CHRIST, Who is the life ; or of some ordinance for conveying and ministering that life ; as the tree in the garden of Eden was to Adam when he was created ; for by feeding on it, he would have lived for ever. The tree seen in the vision by S. John, is said to "bear twelve manner of fruits." As the tree is an emblem of CHRIST, so the twelve manner of fruits which it bare, are emblematical of His ordinances ; which we have seen are, in their character, twelfefold. The type of this twelfefoldness of cha-

Vide Bloom-  
field's Greek  
Testament.

racter is expressed in the twelve stones of the ephod, the twelve tribes of Israel, and in the twelve Apostles chosen by our LORD at the beginning. Hence the holy city, or CHRIST's glorified Church, hath twelve foundations, and twelve gates. From which we gather, that the LORD sums up His spiritual operations in his mystical body, the Church, under the number TWELVE, whether in Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists or Pastors; each of which offices we believe to be twelvefold in its ministry to the universal church.

The LORD JESUS CHRIST, is the only tree of life, in the midst of the new Creation or Paradise of God. He alone hath immortality and eternal life; because He is not only Man, but God; and we have that life through our union with Him. "As the FATHER hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the SON to have life in Himself, . . . because He is the Son of Man." It is in and through Him as man, that this life is manifested and given. He alone can give forth the twelve manner of fruits, through His appointed ordinances, in His mystical body, for the sustentation of all who feed upon Him. "As the living FATHER hath sent Me, and I live by the FATHER; so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." S. John v.  
26.

The pure river of the water of life, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb, being on either side of the tree which groweth in the street of the holy city, is an emblem of the HOLY GHOST as proceeding from the SON, Who is one with the FATHER, and Who, as the CHRIST of God, possesses not only all gifts of ministry, but also the fulness of the HOLY GHOST, as it is written,—“In Whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” This river being on each side of the tree of life, shows also, that it is through the S. John vi.  
57.

operations of the Holy Spirit, that the life of CHRIST will be eternally ministered.

The tree is also said to yield her fruit every month ; from which expression we gather that there will be stated periods, in which all who are saved, shall come up to CHRIST's glorified Church, the heavenly Jerusalem, for special ministry and blessing ; as it is expressed in the preceding chapter, that " the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light thereof, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." And as this book concentrates the light of all holy Scripture, we may discern the shadow of this, in the Israelitish nation going up to the earthly Jerusalem periodically, to worship the LORD of Hosts.

Deut. xvi.  
16.

"The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." As the fruit of the tree is for the sustentation of life, so are the leaves for healing ; that is, not in the sense of restoration, but of *preservation* : for we are expressly told " that there should be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away." We have before said that we have not life in ourselves, but only through our union with CHRIST ; and as life, even in its highest state of perfection, requires *renovation*, so to exclude that idea from it, would be to suppose either that the creature had been changed into God, or that consciousness was no longer an element of its being. The principle of dependence, sustentation, and preservation, is inherent in the creature, and must ever belong to him as such. God alone is independent, self-existent, immutable, and unchangeable. This the creature is not, nor ever can be, for he never can be God. Infallibility of condition, does not necessarily exclude the idea of change, or dependence,

Rev. xxi. 4.



or renovation. For though it be true, that in the new heavens and new earth, men cannot change for the worse, as in the case of Adam's fall, yet will they be changed from glory to glory, through the ages of eternity ever approximating more and more to the perfections of GOD, but never attaining unto His fulness.

"There shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face; and His Name shall be in their foreheads." There being no more curse is a confirmation of the foregoing interpretation, in which we stated that the creation of the new heavens and new earth, is subsequent to the millennial age: for death is not destroyed till the end of that age, when it is cast into the lake of fire. "The throne of God and the Lamb," being in this new creation, shows that there is now a connecting link between GOD and the creature; between His throne and the universe; and is expressive of the entire dependence of the creature on, and his sustentation by, Him Who sitteth thereon. Moreover, it is said, "They shall see His face," and we know that God can be seen only in the face of JESUS CHRIST. God hath not been, nor ever can be seen, save in the Person of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. And "This is the true God and eternal life." <sup>18, John v. 20.</sup> "His Name written upon their foreheads," is expressive not only of their being in His immediate presence, but of their participation in His glory; even the glory of Him, Whose Name is above every name, whether in heaven or in earth.

"And there shall be no night there: and they need no candle, neither light of the sun: for the LORD God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever." The symbolism of this verse, reveals to us the

1 Cor. xiii.  
12.

high spiritual glory to which those who are of the heavenly Jerusalem, that is, of the bride, shall be raised. "There shall be no night there"—no darkness. The highest spiritual attainments here, are infinitely below the glory which shall then be revealed in us. "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known." And they need no lamp, neither light of the sun." The *lamp*, is an emblem of ministry or teaching; and the *sun*, of rule; but they shall have no occasion for either the one or the other: for the LORD GOD Himself giveth them light. He not only dwelleth with them, being personally present in their midst, but dwelleth in them by His Spirit, filling them with His own light. The shadow of this glory, was seen in the Most Holy Place of the Temple; which was not lighted either by the lamps, as in the Holy Place; nor by the sun, as in the outer court, but was illuminated by the Divine Presence. And as the saints of GOD who are of the Bride, require not light given through an ordinance for teaching, so neither do they stand in need of rule: for they are one with CHRIST, having the same Spirit, the same mind, and the same judgment. And therefore it is also written in this prophecy, "They shall reign for ever and ever." This is the peculiar privilege and dignity of those who are of this heavenly city; that is, of the Bride, the Lamb's wife.

"And He said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true; and the LORD GOD of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done." The heavenly messenger entrusted with this Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, assures His servant John of the certainty of these

things, lest the surpassing glory, revealed in this vision, should appear too great for the heart of man to believe. And we learn from these words, that the Apostleship in the last days, to whom the Revelation will be unfolded, shall possess the assurance of the truth, that they may testify unto others also, and speak with certainty of these things, which we are again reminded it is the will and purpose of God to make known unto His servants. And we, who are living in these last days, should make them our immediate and present hope ; because they are things which must shortly be done.

“Behold I come quickly : blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” The hope of the LORD’s coming, is that which was given to sustain the Church from the beginning ; and in the light of the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, we perceive how through unbelief, this hope would not be *realized* till the end of the age, when a revived Apostleship should prepare the Church and make her ready, that she might be presented as a chaste virgin unto CHRIST. Or in other words, the declaration “Behold I come quickly,” has special reference to the period in which this revelation shall be made known unto God’s servants. And they shall keep the sayings of the prophecy of this book, and be blessed in so doing ; and being in the secret of God’s purpose, shall be fellow-workers with Him in the accomplishment of it.

“And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the Angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not : for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of

this book : worship God." The Apostle bears witness of the things which he both saw and heard ; and such was the glory of the heavenly messenger, and the reverence and awe produced in his mind, that he fell at his feet to worship. Idolatry was doubtless farthest from the Apostle's mind : for it is that soul-destroying sin against which he warned the Church, exhorting his children to keep themselves from idols, and testifying of JESUS CHRIST, that He is the only true God and eternal life. There needed, therefore, no other assertion, to keep him from worshipping at the feet of the Angel, than that he was his fellow servant, and of his brethren the prophets, and of them that keep the sayings of the prophecy of this book. We have before shown, that the angel which appeared unto S. John, was not one of the heavenly host, but of the body of CHRIST, which indeed the description the angel or messenger gives of himself sufficiently proves. And the effect produced on the Apostle's mind in beholding him, may serve as a warning to the Church in these days, lest we fall into the snare of idolatry, or fall down before any of God's creatures, or give that reverence and honour unto them, which is due to God alone, as many of our brethren in the Greek and Roman communion have done. For, if one member of the body of CHRIST may not worship before another, in whom the HOLY GHOST dwelleth, how much less should it be permitted before any visible emblem or symbol of the LORD's presence.

" And he said unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book : for the time is at hand." The command here given to the Apostle, shows that God would not have the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, contained in this book, to be sealed ; and also that it is

Vide 1 S.  
John v. 20.

Vide page 7.

the duty of an Apostleship to see that these things are made known to the Church. In the absence of this ministry they have been sealed up; but it is here implied that a time would come, when this light should be restored, and the sayings of this prophecy no longer remain hidden. For regarding S. John as a type of the last Apostleship, which should tarry till the LORD come, we may be assured this shall be fulfilled in its appointed time.

“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.” This authoritative mode of expression, following the prophecy which announces the time of its fulfilment, shows that as men are then found they must remain for ever. The unjust must remain unjust, and the filthy must remain filthy; for there will be no means or possibility of altering their condition—nothing whereby they can be made righteous or cleansed from their impurity. And as their condition will be unalterable in its defilement, so will that of the righteous in its purity and holiness.

“And behold I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” The judgment here referred to, and which the LORD will execute at the time when this prophecy shall be fulfilled, is in accordance with the foregoing announcement. Every man shall then be rewarded according as his work is: for every man shall occupy that place in the kingdom for which he is fitted—in no other would he be able to serve God. With this agree the words of the Apostle Paul, who says, “We must <sup>2 Cor. v. 10.</sup> all appear before the judgment seat of CHRIST; that every one may receive the things done in his body, ac-

cordova to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." Whilst the LORD encourages His servants in the work of faith, and labour of love, by the declaration that He cometh quickly, and that His reward is with Him to give unto every man as his work shall be; He in these words directs them, as it were, to look off from themselves unto Him, as the fulness of all wisdom, and light; the sum and substance of all revelation; the beginning and the ending: the first and the last in the purpose of God; and whoso thus looketh unto Him, shall not fail in the wisdom of God, or in power to do His Will.

"Blessed are they which do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." We have already seen that the city is an emblem of the bride, the Lamb's wife; and also that the tree, which groweth in the street of the holy city, is a symbol of CHRIST, administering life and blessing through His ordinances, to those who come into the city. And we have learnt, that those who *come* into the city, are not of the city, but are *of the saved nations*. And though the condition of the saints, symbolized by the city, is the highest state of blessedness,—for "it is more blessed to give than to receive"—yet those shall indeed be blessed, who have right to enter through the gates into the city: for they shall be able to walk in the light thereof, and to eat of the tree of life, whose very leaves appear to be symbolical of ordinances of blessing to the nations.

Those who have not right to enter into the beloved city, and who indeed will never be able to do so, are the *reprobates*; and the enumeration here given, would seem to embrace every class of the wicked: for there is no species of iniquity which may not be classed under these six forms here enumerated. Though to a superficial observer it may appear otherwise, the light, in which we have meditated this wonderful prophecy, shows us most clearly that the word *without*, as used in this passage, does not mean that they are round about the city, as those who could approach unto it or surround it, but that they are *external to or out of the glorious and blessed* CONDITION of those, who are privileged to approach the city and enter into it. And we know, wherever the habitation of the wicked may be, that it is far from the abode of the blessed; while there is nothing either in locality or condition, to prevent the saved nations from entering continually through the gates into the holy city.

“I JESUS have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches. I am the root and off-spring of David, and the bright and morning star.” The LORD JESUS did not communicate these things immediately to the Apostle, but sent a messenger unto him; who, as we have before seen, was one of the prophets. We have a strong corroboration of this fact from the expressions used in the sixth verse, where it is said, “The LORD God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done,” which is as much as to say that the messenger is one of the holy prophets. In the seventh verse, he is pronounced blessed, who keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book; and the messenger declares of himself that he is one

of those that keep them, and the fellow servant of S. John, and of his brethren the prophets. This in course implies *equality*, and cannot refer to those angels who are servants to the Church, as ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto them that are heirs of salvation. These things being shown unto S. John by one of the prophets, who is also called a *man*—considered as a symbolic act—teaches us, that it is through the ordinance or ministry of prophets that the LORD reveals His purpose.

Vide pages 7  
and 348.

Rev. xxi. 17.

Rom. i. 3.

S. Luke ii. 4.

P's. cxxxii.  
11.

2 Sam. vii.  
12-16.  
Isa. xi.

Jer. xxiii. 5.

The titles which the LORD assumes to Himself at the close of this wonderful prophecy, are peculiarly appropriate : and connecting as they do, the past and the future, may be used to assure us of the certainty of its fulfilment. The significant emblem of “The root of David,” contains the mystery of His primordality, as the CHRIST of GOD ; by Whom, and after Whose image and likeness, Adam was created, and up to whom the genealogy of David is traced in the Gospel. “*The offspring* of David,” relates to the mystery of the Incarnation of the SON of GOD, by which act the most wonderful of prophecies was fulfilled, and He became the seed of David according to the flesh, being lineally descended from him of the tribe of Judah. To Him also as the Son of David, the promise of the kingdom was especially made. “The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David ; He will not turn from it ; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.” “I will set up thy seed after thee, and will establish His kingdom.” “There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.” “Behold the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper.” “He



shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest : and the LORD God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David : and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever ; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.” S. Luke 1.  
32 33.

The designation of Himself, as “ *The bright and morning star*,” is no less appropriate to the closing of this Revelation. For the morning star is the symbol of the resurrection ; directing us as it does, to the rising sun. And therefore, “ the morning star ” is promised to be given to the faithful who overcome, to assure them that they shall partake of the “ FIRST RESURRECTION,” and obtain dominion in the morning of that day, when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings ; which shall be a morning without clouds, a morning bright with splendour, like the clear shining after the rain. Rev. ii. 28.  
2 Sam. xxiii.  
4.

“ *The Spirit and the Bride say, Come.*” Not the Spirit alone or the Bride alone, but the Spirit AND the Bride. Thus shall it be at the time of the LORD’s appearing. The HOLY GHOST will be manifested in the Church of CHRIST as at the beginning, as in the day of her espousal, and will be recognized as “ the Comforter,” as *Personally* present with His people, and dwelling in them. And His voice shall be heard in their midst, saying, COME. And the spirit that does *not* say, Come, is *not* the Spirit of God. There is also *twofoldness* in the utterance. As there is a twofold witness borne to CHRIST at the time of His appearing, so there are *two voices* heard, saying, *Come* ; the voice of the Spirit and the voice of the Bride—“ The Spirit and the Bride say, Come.”

“ *And let him that heareth say, Come.*” The Bride is a symbol used in this book to designate the condi-

tion of a people "redeemed from among men;" an elect people, in whom the HOLY GHOST dwelleth; a sealed and prepared people; a people of one heart and mind with CHRIST, loving the things which He commands, and desiring those that He promises. And there are those who will hear the voice of the Spirit and the Bride, who are not of that company. These only *hear* the voice of the Spirit, but are not indwelt with the HOLY GHOST, and, though *associated* with the Bride, are not *of* her. Their condition also is distinguished from that of the Bride by their being *instructed* or *commanded* to say Come, which the Bride is not; but speaketh out of the abundance of her heart, being "full of the HOLY GHOST and of faith."

"*And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.*" Thirst, is not the condition of those who have attained, but of those who are seeking to attain. In other words, it is not the condition of those who are filled with the Spirit; as our LORD said, "Whoso drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." As there are *now*, so will there be many *after* the translation, who have not heard either the voice of the Spirit or of the Bride, and who are thirsting for salvation, having no other idea beyond that of being saved! There will be a vast multitude of such in the time when Antichrist shall reign; who after washing their robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb, shall attain what they seek, and be delivered out of all their troubles, being saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation; as it is written of them in this book, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on

S. John iv.  
14.

Rev. vii. 16,  
17.

them, or any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

"I testify unto every man that heareth (or understandeth) the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Such is the solemnity with which this book of books is closed; giving it a sanction and sacredness peculiar to itself, and not expressed with respect to any other book in the Holy Scriptures. Indeed, the wonderful things revealed in this book, its structure, as well as the time and manner in which the prophecy contained in it is given, claim for it, as the crowning book of Scripture, this superlative dignity. For this Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, is the sum and substance of all revelation, concentrating in itself all the rays of God's purpose, reflected through the types and shadows of the law, the predictions of the prophets, and the teaching, exhortation, and commandments of the Lord and His Apostles. And if this book be perverted or misunderstood, it is because men do not read it in the light of those Scriptures which have gone before. But to misunderstand or misinterpret the words of this prophecy, is not to commit the sin which is here spoken of, against which such fearful denunciations are made. If it were so, the fear of being brought under the condemnation here written, would effectually prevent any attempt being made to read and under-

stand it, and nullify the encouragement so strongly given us to do so. Such an idea is derogatory to the honour of God, Who seeketh not to ensnare, but to bless His children. And we may appeal to every one who has ever read, or sought to hear and understand the words of the prophecy of this book, however he may have failed or come short of its full meaning and true interpretation, if he has not obtained a *blessing* in his meditation; assured that every one who has read this book with an honest heart, and pure desire to know the truth of God contained herein, will answer in the affirmative. The condemnation contained in the words we are considering will never light upon such, but upon those who, having known (*ἀκούοντες*) the words of this prophecy, *wilfully* pervert them. The denunciation is against those who sin against light and knowledge; against those, who, like Judas, sin with their eyes open. There is a judgment hanging over the heads of those who knowingly reject or pervert the truth of God, which rests not upon those who sin ignorantly. Cursed must that man be who knowingly adds to, or takes from the words of this prophecy. Whosoever shall so sin against God, to him shall be added the plagues which are written in this book; and whoso shall in like manner take from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Moreover the fearful denunciation here written, may be to guard the sacredness and sanctity of the text itself. For though the truth may be perverted and abused by false interpretations, so long as the text remains, the prophecy is preserved in its integrity, and capable of being opened and interpreted in the Church,

by the Spirit. We say, capable of being *unfolded*, because it is here implied that no new revelation or Word of God will ever be given to the Church. And whosoever propounds a new revelation has in him the mark of Antichrist.

*“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, LORD JESUS.”* This declaration of the LORD intimates prophetically, that at the time of the end, or period of the LORD’s Advent, His voice will again be heard in the Church by the HOLY GHOST, as it was in the days of the Apostles, through prophetic utterance, and in the ministry of His Word for teaching, declaring that HE COMETH QUICKLY. And the Elect Church, the true and faithful disciples of CHRIST, will heartily respond to the announcement, saying, “AMEN ; EVEN so, COME, LORD JESUS.” And when this response is made, the LORD will come ; and the Bride—the Espoused One—having made herself ready, shall be presented as a chaste virgin unto the LORD, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. And this is that grace for which the Apostle prays in behalf of the Church, concluding the whole prophecy with that heavenly benediction which the LORD confers through His Apostleship, and without which the Church cannot be prepared for Him—“THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST BE WITH YOU ALL. AMEN.”

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